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TO OUR READERS:

In compliance with the Israeli military authorities, and under the guise of the much criticized "Emergency Regulations" of 1945, Al-Fajr is required to submit all material prepared for publication in this weekly, and also in the Arabic Daily and Bi-Weekly Hebrew Edition, to the Israeli censorship authorities, who use this blanket authority excessively. The material appearing on pages labeled with letters has all been censored and expunged by the Israeli authorities. We found it necessary and relevant to publish it on these pages in the foreign edition.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS EMBROILED IN POLITICAL CONTROVERSY

Jenin Mass Poisoning Grips West Bank

Close to 1000 residents of the Jenin district have been hospitalised since March 21 in a bizarre case of mass poisoning. Between 400 and 600 Jenin residents were admitted to hospital March 29. Earlier Jenin Hospital admitted a total of 235 girls and a few male staff from nine schools during the past seven days who were poisoned by a mysterious chemical. Other reports put the number at over 400 in the nine hospitals taking victims. The poisoned girls are all from secondary, preparatory and elementary schools in Jenin, Arrabeh village 12 kilometers from Jenin, Maythaloun village 28 kilometers from Jenin and Barqin. Three new cases were reported March 28 and five girls returned to the hospital after being released when their condition worsened.

General symptoms are: headache, general weakness, relaxed muscles, blueness of extremities, dilated pupils, shivering, difficulty in breathing, nausea and fainting. The degree of seriousness of the cases vary, but Arrabeh School cases appear the most serious.

The nature of the substance is shrouded in mystery. Medical experts are not willing, at the moment, to go beyond speculation. Palestinian experts in the town have reached the interim conclusion that some substance was sprayed on the curtains of schools and that girls inhaled it in a form of vapour. They quote the Israeli health ministry and military investigator who released the same conclusions, March 27.

The Israeli 'civil administration' head in the town, however, claimed that the poisoning is "a deliberate act caused by local provocateurs to create tension in the town." An Israeli military spokesman said the same day that there was no evidence the poisoning was deliberate. Mystery over the exact nature of the poisoning deepened, March 28, when a 15-person team set up by the Israelis to investigate the incidents concluded that there was "no evidence of either deliberate or accidental poisoning." The military and civilian health experts did not proffer alternative explanations for the phenomenon.

Poison victims at a West Bank hospital. The majority of the victims are girls from schools in the Jenin area.

Over 370 schoolgirls and residents from 'Arrabeh Secondary Girls School and Zahra Secondary Girls School in Jenin have been hospitalised. Over 50 students from Zahra school were taken March 26 to Jenin, Tulkarm, the National and Rafidia hospitals.

The first poisoning cases occurred in 'Arrabeh Girls School at around 8:00 am, March 21, just as the first class started. Two girls fainted and were taken by a teacher to the local clinic for treatment. Soon, more girls started to fall unconscious and the school principal contacted the education department in Jenin. In all 35 people including a teacher, the gate keeper, and a woman visitor of the school were hospitalised. All complained of headaches, dizziness, and eye irritation. The school was ordered closed.

As the number of victims continued to increase in the following three days, Jenin hospital and the West Bank health department requested assistance from the bigger and better equipped Israeli Rambam hospital in Haifa. Officials at Jenin hospital said that five patients were sent there for blood tests.

Relatives of victims and prominent 'Arrabeh area residents suspect that the mystery disease is a consequence of acts by unknown people. Rumours in the district say that blood tests conducted by Rambam hospital did give an explanation of the causes of the poisoning, but they were kept secret. Other people say that the school was injected with some kind of poison, before classes and that it faded after the severe rain storms which swept the Jenin district on the second day of the cases. The administration of the Yaba'ad Secondary School for girls notified the police about a yellow material found on the roof of the school. Experts examined the material but did not release their findings. Students told an *Al Fajr* reporter that they "smelt a strange gas and felt pains in their bodies." Obieda Taleb, 15, told *Al Fajr* that she "smelt something stinging and felt sick with pains, dizziness, and suffocation in throat."

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Al Fajr Editor Arrested

Al Fajr editor-in-chief Hanna Siniora was formally arrested, March 30, when he answered a call to appear before police interrogators at Jerusalem's Moscobiyya detention centre. He was released 24 hours later without being charged.

Hanna Siniora, Al Fajr Editor, was arrested Wednesday night.

The 44-year-old pharmacist, who is in charge of all *Al Fajr* publications, left his home at 5:30 pm after police called his office and his home and asked to see him "immediately." It was not known that Siniora had been arrested until family and *Al Fajr* colleagues called the detention center when, hours later, he did not return home.

Siniora, a Jerusalem resident, must be brought before a Magistrate's Court within 48 hours and formally charged or released, according to Israeli law. His lawyer, Arnold Spear, attempted to visit his client March 31 but was not permitted access by police.

Siniora is the chief editor of *Al Fajr* Arabic daily, the English and Hebrew weeklies and the monthly literary magazine all published in Jerusalem. He is also co-responsible for an independent weekly publication *Al Usbua Al Jadid*.

Since last August the father of three has had his travel to the rest of the West Bank and to Gaza restricted, by military orders, for six and nine months respectively. His only previous arrest came one year ago when he marched at the head of a demonstration of Palestinian journalists protesting Israeli political censorship of the press. He is frequently interviewed by the foreign press and media about his political views as well as about harassment of Palestinian newspapers.

Al Fajr is currently pursuing a case in the High Court against the military censors concerning censorship criteria, which *Al Fajr* editors speculate may have some bearing on his arrest. The case, after more than a year of delays, has recently been rescheduled a hearing in May. (Last Autumn the arrest and prosecution of *Al Fajr* English's editor, Sam'an Khoury, also came weeks after an application he had made to the High Court querying a closure order for his press and translation office.)

In the past six months, the four top editors of *Al Fajr* and its correspondents from all major West Bank towns have been arrested for varying periods of detention. *Al Fajr* Arabic's Jenin correspondent, Qaddoura Musa is currently being held in Fara'a prison without charge. He was arrested Sunday, March 28. Hebron correspondent Fawzi Shweiki last month served a one-month prison sentence and the Tulkarm, Nablus and Jerusalem correspondents have also been detained this year.

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Death Reports Confirmed At Curfewed Jalazon

Israeli soldiers turned back an UNRWA medical team at a military checkpost at Jalazon refugee camp March 30, without explanation. The incident fueled worries about the health situation of the camp's population of 6000 who have been under curfew since March 8. Located outside Ramallah, on the Nablus road, a number of recent deaths in Jalazon have been confirmed.

Throughout the duration of the siege, residents of (Jalazon) camp are forbidden to go out or even to open windows for fresh air. The windows of over 80 houses have been broken as a result of the "criminal act" of airing the house. Those found outdoors are fined after, of course "necessary treatment" – sums of no less than IS80,000. The reason for going out is unimportant. There are eight military tents at the main entrance to the camps as well as foot and jeep patrols.

No attention is payed to why an individual may be outdoors. Jamal Ahmad Sa'ud left to work using the mountain road. When he was caught, he was detained for hours and beaten. His spine was broken and he died. The mouming family were not even allowed to open the house. They were forbidden to hold the required religious rites for the deceased. Nobody knows exactly how many have been arrested, but some estimate the number at over one hundred, at Fara'a prison.

Roadblocks, searches and patrols in West Bank towns, especially Ramallah, search meticulously for youths from the camp who have managed to get out. They are returned to the camp.

Camp residents issued a declaration urging the national institutions and residents to come out in solidarity with them. (Translation, Al Talia. 31.3.83)

According to the official UNRWA statement issued March 30 "Medical services have been adequate and medical teams, when allowed, have provided necessary treatment." Jalazon, along with three other camps and two towns, was put under curfew after protests in the camp against the visit of former US President Jimmy Carter to the area.

Israeli Court Freezes Sentences

The Israeli High Court of Justice in Jerusalem decided, March 22, to freeze the Ramallah military sentences of fines and suspended imprisonment for three Palestinian schoolgirls. The High Court notified the Kharousheh family that three Israeli judges and a representative of the military prosecution will decide, after two weeks, whether to issue an order *nisi* to halt the implementation of the sentences, or to accept the Ramallah military court's sentences.

On March 13, the military court in Ramallah fined Randa Mahmoud Kharousheh, 13, IS80,000 and sentenced her to six months imprisonment. Her father must serve six months in prison if he does not pay within a week.

Yaqoub Ahmad Meqdadi, 40, made a compromise for his two daughters who were fined IS50,000 each in the same case. Yaqoub petitioned the military authorities in Ramallah to lessen the fines because "they are a harsh punishment and [he has] to feed 10 children." Israeli authorities agreed that he must pay IS40,000 by March 23. Mahmoud Kharousheh, the father of Randa, petitioned to the High Court in Jerusalem to cancel the sentence, stating his daughter did not demonstrate or throw rocks at Israeli soldiers.

Lawyer Jonathan Kuttab, representing the family, said in the High Court that the father could not be sentenced for acts which he did not commit, at a court session to which he was not summoned. The court will deliver a final decision in two weeks.

Syria and Israel Clash

BEIRUT, AFP – The Beirut-Damascus highway and in the Beqa'a region were tense March 30, with clashes between the Israeli and Syrian armies.

The Israeli military spokesman announced that at approximately 5:30 pm, there was an exchange of fire between Israeli forces and a Palestinian group near the village of Deir al-Maras, east of the Beirut-Damascus road, which lasted for about 15 minutes.

Lebanese radio reported an exchange of fire between the Syrian army and the Israeli army on the Beirut-Damascus road. The Israeli army fired artillery at the Syrian position.

Reports said that there have been exchanges of machine-gun fire in the Beqa'a between Israeli and Syrian forces for the last two days. Israel planes carried out surveillance flights, March 30, over the Beqa'a and South Lebanon as the Syrians reinforced their positions in the Beqa'a to confront Israeli forces. (Translations: Al Quds, March 31)

Youth Killed in Land Day Protests

One West Bank Palestinian was killed and four others wounded on Land Day, March 30 when troops dispersed demonstrations. Curfews were declared on 14 areas. There were several reports of molotov cocktail attacks on Israeli vehicles.

In Tarqumia, 10 kilometers north-west of Hebron, Israeli troops opened fire on student demonstrators in the village. Tahsin Abd al-Fattah Fataftah, 18, a student at the Tarqumia secondary school was hit. He was dead on arrival at the Alia hospital in Hebron.

Qalandia refugee camp, mid-way between Jerusalem and Ramallah, was under curfew from the early morning. UNRWA officials quoted local employees who said that gun-shots were heard shortly before the curfew was announced. Four youths were later reported injured.

The commercial strike started in all major cities. Israeli soldiers forced open commercial premises in several cities, however. In Jerusalem shops, offices and schools remained closed. Hundreds of police and border patrollers were posted on street corners to put down any protests.

Demonstrators climbed the walls of the Old City at Herod's Gate and stoned Israeli troops below. One soldier was reported hurt. The Israelis arrested at least four youths in connection with the incident.

Dheisheh refugee camp, two kilometers south of Bethlehem, witnessed the fiercest protests. A total of 11 people, including three tourists, were injured when two Israeli busses were stoned. The curfew on the camp, which was lifted a few days ago, was reimposed. The last curfew was in force for two weeks.

Tahsin Fataftah 18, killed during Land Day demonstrations March 30.

In Bethlehem all schools, shops and offices were closed and traffic was limited to essential services and military patrols. Israel Radio reported that a molotov was thrown at an Egged bus near Rachel's Tomb at the city entrance in the late evening. There were no injuries the radio said.

In Hebron the commercial strike lasted until 10:00 am when Israeli troops forced some shops open by cutting off locks and welded others closed.

In Ramallah-al-Bireh Israeli soldiers did not allow the commercial strike to last for long. Reports from the twin cities said that around 10:00 am troops began forcing open shops in the Manara. Private schools also closed when no students showed up for classes.

In Bir Zeit Land Day was marked with a voluntary work day at the university's new campus. Around 400 students and staff participated. They planted pine trees and held a concert of national songs and folk dances.

Nablus was completely sealed by Israeli military personnel. Inside, the Qasabeh quarter was curfewed after stone throwing incidents. Nearby Balata, Askar and Ain Beit al-Ma' camps were placed under curfew following protests and clashes with troops.

In the Tulkarm district, two molotovs were thrown at Israeli vehicles but both missed their targets. The villages of Shwaikeh and Dannabeh were put under curfew.

In the city itself clashes occurred in the half empty streets where Palestinian youths and Israeli soldiers traded stones for bullets. No one was hurt. Later, soldiers toured the city forcing open stores. About one-third of business establishments were opened. Tulkarm refugee camp was also put under curfew.

In Qalqilya, the western-most city in the West Bank, a molotov was thrown at an Israeli settlers car. Israel Radio said that there were no casualties.

Gaza Strip

Residents of the Strip refugee camps and cities took to the streets. Youths set tyres ablaze, hoisted Palestinian flags and stoned soldiers whenever they approached. Soldiers fired scores of tear gas cannisters into crowds. There were an unspecified number of arrests.

Two grenades were thrown at Israeli troops in two separate incidents in Jabalia camp. It was later curfewed.

In Gaza City shops on both sides of Omar al-Mukhtar Street, the main thoroughfare, were forced open. The Strip military governor led raids on stores issuing indefinite closure orders to shopkeepers who refused to comply with orders to open.

Palestinians in Lebanon Celebrate Land Day

Lebanese army forces dispersed a demonstration by several hundred Palestinians commemorating the seventh Land Day anniversary March 30, a Lebanese military spokesman announced the same day. The Israeli army dispersed another protest attempt at Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp, near Sidon.

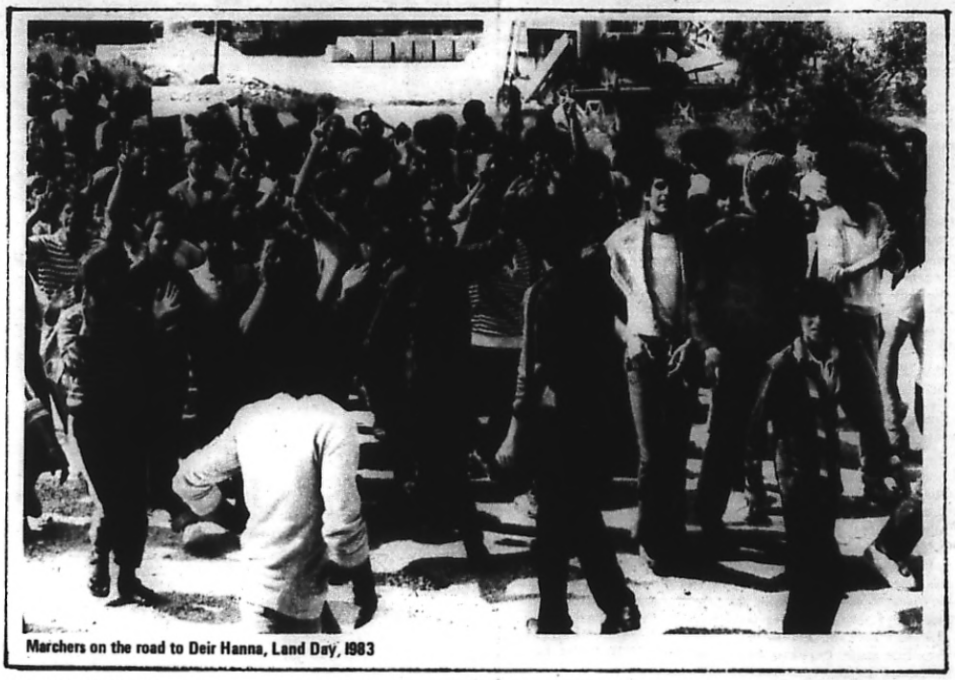
Reports emerging from South Lebanon said that students at the Palestinian refugee camp gathered from the early morning in the camp streets, in preparation for a march. The Israeli army, which was present at the camp all day, dispersed the crowds forcefully. One day earlier, Israeli authorities detained 30 residents and beefed up the number of soldiers stationed at the entrances.

In Burj al-Barajneh refugee camp, on the southern outskirts of Beirut, the Lebanese army arrested an unknown number of Palestinian residents following a demonstration to commemorate Land Day. Schools were also disrupted on that day.

In related news, Israel Radio quoted officers under Sa'ad Haddad command as saying that the attacks against the Israeli army which occurred during the past two days are directly related to Land Day. The radio went on to say that the Palestinian inhabitants have shown more hostility towards the Israeli army, and that security measures have been increased.

FLAGS, SLOGANS, STONES AND BURNING TYRES THROUGHOUT COUNTRY

25,000 March in the Galilee to Mark Land Day



Marchers on the road to Deir Hanna, Land Day, 1983

Land Day generally passed quietly in the Galilee, the Triangle and the Naqab as Palestinians .... attended demonstrations and the police and the army by and large stayed out of population centres. There were sporadic clashes in some towns, however, and several arrests were reported.

The centre of attention was Sakhnin, the Galilee village where three people died on the first Land Day 1976. Demonstrating Palestinians clashed with police and border guards on the outskirts of Sakhnin. Some demonstrators lost consciousness after Israeli soldiers fired tear gas. After laying a wreath at the Land Day Martyrs memorial marchers from Sakhnin joined with others from Arrabeh and formed a demonstration one kilometer long. The crowd was estimated at 25 -30,000 as they proceeded to Deir Hanna.

During the licensed rally in Deir Hanna Israeli helicopters hovered overhead, which made it difficult to hear the speeches. Saliba Khamis, member of the Committee for the Defence of the Land, Communist Knesset member Meir Vilner, Rafiq Drori from Mapam and Hassan Jabarin, member of Abna' al-Balad stressed the need to protect the land and promised strikes and other protests if the Israeli authorities do not retract plans to annex Arab land in the Galilee to a Jewish Regional Council.

Speakers also applauded the Palestinian leadership and the decisions of the latest Palestine National Council meeting held in Algiers last month. After the rally there were further clashes between demonstrators and Israeli military and police. A number of vehicles' windshields were smashed. Tear gas was fired into the crowd.

In Taibeh, the Triangle, there were two demonstrations. In the morning the local nationalist organisation al-Nahda held a protest march and meeting and in the afternoon was the official meeting organised by the Committee for the Defence of the Land. There were clashes between young men and police in the early morning at the entrance to the village. Stones were thrown but the situation quietened down after the intervention of al-Nahda leaders.

Police prevented students from Jerusalem from getting into the village until the protest meeting was almost over. "We were held at a roadblock for two hours, they took our ID numbers and examined all papers," said one student activist. "Then they suddenly vanished and we proceeded into the village." Several Palestinian flags were raised around the village and protestors chanted popular pro-PLO slogans.

The morning meeting, attended by about 800 people, according to independent estimates, was addressed by speakers from al-Nahda, the Abna' al-Balad (Sons of the Country) section in Lydda and the Nazareth Progressive Movement. Speakers stressed the significance of Land Day and called on the Palestinians to fight new attempts to confiscate further land from their villages. Several speakers spoke of the tragedy of Sabra and Shatila, the recent poisoning incidents in the Jenin area and condemned the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Roadblocks were in action once more in the afternoon to stop buses of Rakah (Israeli Communist Party) members and supporters from getting to their rally. Three buses were halted at police roadblocks close to the village. Border police and army reinforcements were also on standby close to Taibeh, some in armoured vehicles. Helicopters circled the village throughout the day.

The 4000 people who attended the meeting, including many of those who had been at the morning event, heard speakers repeat many of the same themes. MK Tawfiq Toubi demanded the release of ICP activists who had been rounded up in preemptive arrest campaigns the night before and stressed Arab unity.

Most of the Palestinian communities in Israel observed the day by closing shops and offices and not going to work, though there was no official strike call. There were incidents of stone throwing, flag raising and tyre burning in several communities including Arrabeh, Sakhnin, Majd al-Kurum, Deir al-Assad, Kufr Manda, Nahf, Shafa'Amr, Kabul, Kufr Kanna, Aksal, Tar'an, Reineh and Deir Hanna in the Galilee and Um al-Fahm, Kufr Qara', Taibeh, Tira and Baq'a al-Gharbiyya in the Triangle. Two border police were reported injured by stones in Baq'a after clashes with local youths.

There were also clashes between military and police personnel and demonstrators in Tel Saba', Rahat and Laqiyya in the Naqab. Five arrests were reported after cars were set alight. There were also reports of cars being stoned from all three places.

Despite a massive army and police presence, roadblocks and helicopter surveillance around 1500 people gathered at the Beduin concentration settlement of Tel Sab'a, in the Naqab. Speakers included Emil Tuma, editor of the ICP Arabic organ *Al Ittihad*, Uzi Borstein, spokesman for RAKAH, MK Charlie Biton of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, and leaders representing student unions in universities in the Naqab and local dignitaries and activists.

Emil Tuma spoke of the special circumstances of this particular Land Day anniversary in the light of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. He said the Israeli aggression had failed in its aims of destroying the military, political and organisational presence of PLO in Lebanon; had failed to break the National Lebanese Forces, and had failed to break Syrian steadfastness against US imperialism and its alliance with the Soviet Union. The results of the war, Tuma said, had been a strengthening of Palestinian national unity and consensus, a feeling which was reflected in the Naqab as well as in the Galilee and Triangle. All these Arab lands were faced, he said, with a violent campaign of annexation and increasing Judaisation. The struggle for Arab rights and the determination to remain on the land, according to Tuma, must be a joint effort, together with progressive Jewish forces, against the policies of all Zionist parties.

Uzi Borstein, for the Israeli Communist Party (RAKAH), condemned the annexationist policies of the Likud government inside the 'green line' and in the occupied territories, called for withdrawal from Lebanon and asserted the joint struggle of Jews and Arabs for two independent states for two independent peoples.

MK Charlie Biton spoke of the discrimination against Arabs and asserted that the Zionist parties only differed tactically on how to deprive Arabs of funds for development projects and social security. The political parties talk of equality, Biton said, but all the state laws and facilities were made available for Jews at the expense of the Arabs. He called for self-determination for the Palestinians and for a Palestinian state alongside Israel as the only way to peace and equality. Israel, he said, must withdraw from Lebanon and end the pointless bloodshed of Palestinians, Lebanese and Israelis.

Student leader Salim Sleiman spoke of the confiscation of Naqab land and the harassment of the Beduin population by the Green Patrol in order to turn them off the land to become cheap labour on the Israeli market. One example he quoted was the recent confiscation of 130 head of sheep and the evacuation of Beduin from Tel al-Milh. He sent greetings to those under curfew on the West Bank and to those who fight against the occupation of occupied Arab land and the Israeli aggression in Lebanon. He also saluted the Lebanese National Movement which stood alongside the Palestinians in the fight against Israel and America, as well as the people in the refugee camps of Sabra, Shatila, Ain al-Hilweh and Nabatiyeh.

Student leader al Atrash al so spoke of the attempt to drive Arabs from their land in order to provide the Israeli market with cheap labour, referring to thousands of dunums of land confiscated from Tel al-Milh and Tel Sab'a and other areas in the Naqab as well as Galilee land annexed to the Misgav settlement. He condemned the war to eliminate the Palestinian people in Lebanon, and the massacres of Palestinians in Jordan (Black September), in Tel al-Za'atar and Sabra and Shatila.

Al-Atrash called for a total strike on future Land Days and on the anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila massacres, for the united stand of the people of the Galilee, Triangle and Naqab against land-confiscation and the practices of the Green Patrol. He also called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state under the PLO.

Local activist Nuri al-Uqbi said that all Israeli governments practised racist and discriminatory laws against the Arabs, expropriating Beduin land for repopulation by Jewish settlers. Any government that really wanted peace, he said, must recognise the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and must negotiate directly with it. Israel must also withdraw from Lebanon and live together with the Palestinians with mutual respect.

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Poisonings

Munir Ahmad Hamdan, a young man who suffered from the symptoms of the poisoning, said he was 500 metres from 'Arrabeh school when he was affected. Sources from Jenin Hospital said that there are only four poisoned males.

West Bank health experts who have not been permitted on-the-scene investigation -- have been able to deduce that the poison affects the neurological system and is probably stored in the body's fatty tissue, because of the incidence of recurrent symptoms. There is no way of knowing if the poisoning will have long-term effects.

An independent unofficial Palestinian medical team from Bir Zeit University said they will need at least two weeks to examine blood and urine samples from patients to determine the cause of the poisoning. Rita Giacaman, a biochemistry teacher at Bir Zeit, said that the chemical substance caused adrenal toxication for those who inhaled it. Giacaman dimissed the idea that this substance affects females more than males. Professor Saleh Mahmoud Qa'dan, who runs an analytic laboratory in Nablus, speculated that the chemical substance is a "nitrogen-based compound which affects mostly women and can cause infertility."

Dr Issa Salti, director of the Ramallah Hospital, and the heads of the doctors' and pharmacists' unions are reported to have asked the World Health Organisation to establish an inquiry team to investigate the incidents. They are believed to have received positive responses from the WHO.

Ahmad Abu Daqar, a doctor in Jenin, described for *Al Fajr* a gassing incident at the al-Nahda Street elementary school. "I heard girl students screaming 'Gas, Gas' and I rushed to the school to carry the students to the hospital, the time was 7:20 am. And after two hours my head became very heavy as if it carried 30 kg and I suffered from pains in my joints. I believe that this substance affects the nervous system."

Muna Khaled Rashid, an eighth grader at Zahra school whose case was described as serious, was taken to Rambam hospital in Haifa. There some of her blood was taken for examinations. Muna said when the gas affected her she felt "as if there was an explosion in my head."She could not move her fingers or breathe. In Jenin Hospital she was treated with oxygen.

Basima Ahmad Sabagh from the UNRWA preparatory school, Jenin, said, "I was pulling the curtain of the classroom and I noticed a yellow substance in it. There was a dirty smell like bad eggs and then I fainted."

Many described the causes of poisoning as something unidentified and mysterious.

Reactions

Anger and helplessness swept the whole city. Residents gathered and demonstrated at the centre of Jenin town, March 27. Young Jeninis stoned Israeli soldiers and they imposed a curfew in the town. Seven people were detained. Shops closed in a protest strike.

March 28

The town was almost deserted as the strike continued.

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loudspeakers a curfew. *Al Quds* reported 400 victims and *Al Shaab* 600. *Al Fajr's* Jenin correspondent Qadoura Musa was detained on a 96-hour order.

Reports from Barqin village say 28 girls and four teachers have been poisoned. Tahani Freiz is still under intense oxygen treatment for breathing problems as a result.

The next day there was a total curfew on the city. Western media people said all roads were blocked to all traffic in the morning. Later medical transport was allowed in, as were Jenin ID card holders. Israel Radio announced that one man, one women and a child were admitted to Jenin hospital with poisoning symptoms.

The Jordanian Medical Council in the West Bank issued a statement March 27 demanding that the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Health Organisation and medical specialists "give assistance in revealing the reasons behind the painful events of mass poisoning in Jenin."

The Medical Council statement, issued shortly after the news about the large number of cases taken to hospitals in Jenin, Tulkarm, Nablus, Ramallah and Jerusalem, including some cases delivered to private hospitals and Haifa and Affula hospitals, revealed the findings reached by the specialist physicians.

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. . . . . "since the Israeli authorities have prevented anyone from entering these schools. The Arab doctors are also not able to know the results of tests of those cases which were sent to the Israeli hospitals in Haifa and Affula." The doctors said that, thus far, the results from examinations are negative.

Reacting to the bizarre events in the Jenin disrict Ahmad Abd al-Rahman, the PLO information department director criticized Arab international organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, and the committees of human rights for their laziness in facing the acts of aggression in the occupied territories. In the PLO statement released in Tunisia, Ahmad Abd al-Rahman said that the continuous curfew in the Palestinian camps and the poisoning of the students in Jenin are two examples of the international organisations' negligence.

Soviet Union Warns of Israeli Attack on Syria

MOSCOW, DAMASCUS, AFP

In a strongly worded statement March 30, the Soviet Union accused Israel of preparing to launch a war against Syria and warned of the danger of it continuing to play with fire. The government statement, reported by the TASS news agency, said that Syria was the principal obstacle to US-supported Israeli plans to dominate the Middle East. At the same time, Damascus Radio, accused Israel of threatening war this Spring or Summer. The radio said Syria would take all neccessary precautions.

Damascus Radio referred to the statements made by Israeli Chief-of-Staff General Raphael Eitan, on the eve of the Passover holiday, in which he said that Israel would not be the first to open fire, but would only respond if the Syrians, or the Palestinians behind Syrian lines, struck at Israeli positions.

The radio said that it was most alarming when Israeli hawks, like Eitan, changed their way of talking from mere general threats to specific warnings.

The Soviet declaration said that there were new and disturbing reports from the Middle East where the situation was basically unstable. Israeli military and political figures, it said, were competing to make statements concerning the necessity of war with Syria and of the readiness of the Israeli army.

It accused Israel of making obvious military preparations to strike at Syria under the pretest of protecting Israeli security against defence agreements made by Syria to protect itself from the growing danger from the Israeli side.

The declaration added that the Soviet Union reasserted that the basic rights and interests of all the people of the Middle East could not be attained by force of arms and not by war, but only by the political efforts of all concerned parties and by a comprehensive and just settlement.

Pravda, the organ of the Soviet Communist Party, accused Israel, March 30, of continuing a campaign of preparations for an attack on Syria.

In a commentary, *Pravda* warned that the Israeli forces were reinforcing their positions on Lebanese soil and that they had increased military readiness. The paper said that the US administration was more embroiled in the clear political blackmail and threats. It added that the Israeli campaign against Syria was really an endeavour to blind the world to American and Israeli expansionist plans in the region.

Pravda warned the Arab world that Israel, after entering South Lebanon, was now preparing for an attack on Syria. The people of the Arab countries, the commentary concluded, demanded that their rulers be extremely careful in their dealings with Israel and called on them to support long-awaited Soviet peace initiatives in the Middle East.

Grenade Kills Galilee Boy

One boy was killed and two others were injured when a fragmentation grenade went off in a field outside Shafa 'Amr, March 30, in the Galilee.

A police spokesman said the incident occurred when the three, all under 10, entered a field to pick za'atar. The injured were rushed to Rambam Hospital, where one was pronounced dead. The two others remain hospitalised in serious condition.

Names of the victims were not released.

Censorship This Week

Following is a breakdown of censorship cuts for issue 152, April 1, 1983:

Number of original articles submitted to censor	17
Number of articles totaly censored out	7
Number of articles mutilated beyond use	3
Number of articles partially censored but used	6
Number of articles passed	1*

*This is a new record for censorship. The previous low was set during the uprising in March, 1982. 2

The Dawn

AL-FAJR

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The following editorial was censored.

TRUTH COMES FIRST

Hundreds of Palestinians, mainly teenaged schoolgirls, were hospitalised this week after being poisoned by an unknown substance. The incidents of poisonings spread over a wider area in the Jenin district through the week.

The official Israeli stand turned 180 degrees when at first the government admitted that people had been poisoned, and then the ministry of health released a statement denying any evidence of deliberate or accidental poisoning. Israeli officials also dismissed their own initial reports that a kind of nerve gas had been inhaled.

Moreover a professor-scientist, who as director-general of the health ministry must be seen as an authoritative source, speculated that "the large number of people complaining of poisoning might be some form of mass psychosomatic reaction to a small incident." Was this the voice of a concerned physician?

Could these officials and scientists cite evidence for their opinions? Or is their main concern with "covering up" the facts of a premeditated attempt to injure children? Did they forget that the victims suffered undeniably real symptoms: blueness of extremities and dilated pupils which could hardly be called hysteria? Did they forget that their own army technicians found traces of a suspicious yellow powder on window ledges of a school in Ya'abad? Did they forget the coincidence that many victims testified to a smell of sulphur or rotten eggs before fainting?

We are in no position to accuse anyone. But we do say that the Israeli officials' and scientists' statements do not reveal logical and open minds or an active search for the truth. Is the Israeli government abusing the health of defenceless schoolgirls to hide facts which could be to their political disadvantage?

Only an unbiased medical committee should investigate the incident with full access to all material. And the perpetrators, if any, should be punished by all.

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American Marine under fire in Beirut

ITALIANS BEAR BRUNT OF ATTACKS

Who's Firing at the Multinational Forces?

by Livia Rokach
Our Rome Correspondent

Who is shooting at the troops of the multinational forces in Beirut? Who is interested in "organising a plot in order to pressure the multinational forces to leave Lebanon so that they can have a free hand to act there," in the words of the Italian ambassador to Beirut, Franco Ottieri?

Were these "coordinated, professionally executed terrorist attacks," defined as such by all Western military experts present in the Lebanese capital, intended to hit mainly the Italian contingent and, in this case – Why? Or must last week's bloody events be considered as a general offensive against the very presence of the MNF in Beirut? And in this last case: what are the motivations behind such a wish – plans for the much rumoured "spring offensive" against the Beqa'a and eventually Syria? The desire to prevent more multinational troops arriving in Lebanon to be stationed in the Shouf mountains in order to separate the Phalangist militias from the Druze ones and force an Israeli retreat from that area? Or the intention to prove, as Lebanese Chief of Staff General Ibrahim Tanous has suggested, that the Lebanese army and the multinational forces are incapable of maintaining security "against terrorism," even in the small areas of the Lebanese capital, so how would they be expected to maintain security in South Lebanon if a total retreat of its forces is forced upon Israel? Or were there other motivations which have not been formulated at all, but which lurk behind daily events in Beirut these days and are implicit in Phalangist reports to 'complete the job' begun six months ago in Sabra and Shatila?

All these questions have profoundly disturbed Italian and other European opinion over the past week as, little by little, the initial official attempts to undermine the gravity of the events gave way to a rising irritation and open attribution of political responsibility for the attacks to Israel, and to its refusal to retreat from Lebanon. But in order to give as full as possible an answer to these questions, it is necessary to reconstruct events against the background of two central and significant political facts: Israeli determination that it will reject all proposals including the far-reaching compromise ones, offered by the US to Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, the promulgation of which could mean the retreat, or even only the reduction, of the Israeli military presence in Lebanon; and the parallel determination of the Phalangist forces, with the full support and cover of the Gemayel regime to bring about the expulsion of all Palestinians including those in Beirut.

No Repair Allowed

The general offensive against the multinational forces in Beirut, and against the Italian contingent, must therefore be dated a few hours back in respect to the first attack unleashed against the Italian units patrolling the southern flank of Burj al-Barajneh camp at 9:12 pm on Tuesday, March 15. In the early morning of that day, in fact, the Lebanese army and security forces launched a new offensive against Palestinian camps in south Beirut. Arriving at Burj al-Barajneh camp in large forces, the Lebanese military announced that, by order of the Lebanese government, as of that moment all Palestinians will no longer be able to repair even the tin roofs of their bomb-battered homes and proceeded to carry out arrests of persons accused of having repaired their homes. Fifteen heads of families – all between 50 and 70 – were arrested, taken away, and charged with "abusive construction." The population which has been forced for months now to live literally out in the rain and cold with illnesses caused by such exposure multiplying daily, felt a new peak of exasperation when the Lebanese government, after announcing that 34 more arrests were foreseen for the next day, proceeded to destroy a stock of blocks and timber which the UN had donated to the camp people for the repair of their homes.

Later, UNRWA officials in Beirut disclosed that the letter by the agency asking whether the Lebanese government still recognised as valid the 1950 agreement between Beirut and the UN, according to which Palestinians have the right to build and repair their one-storey tin roof lodgings, has remained unanswered. In view of the lack of response, the UNRWA official said that the UN has recently begun to supply basic building materials to roofless families. Palestinains seeking the protection of the Italian troops during the roundup, told the soldiers moreover, that in past weeks the Lebanese military permitted some families to repair their homes if the refugees paid them between 500 and 2000 Lebanese pounds in *bakhshish*, for looking the other way.

As already explained on other occasions, the Italian, like other contingents of the MNF, is bound by political agreement whereby their presence must by subordinated to the decisions of the Lebanese authorities, and could not intervene in the defence of the people. Resentment against the roundups and maltreatment of the Palestinians and sympathy for the persecuted Palestinians were made quite clear to the Lebanese military. It was in this tense atmosphere that the 1700 or so soldiers and officers went that evening to attend the concert of two Italian singers sent especially from Rome to entertain the troops.

It was against such a background that the first attack on the Italian patrol occurred, followed by similar attacks several hours later while reinforcements from the Italian contingent were conducting a search for the assailants. Nine Italian soldiers were wounded, three of them seriously, in these two attacks. One of the wounded, a 20-year-old Italian marine, the only son of a poor widow, who was refused an exemption from military service, would die a week later in Rome amidst growing pressure amongst public opinion against the presence of Italian troops in Lebanon under the present conditions. Two others risk remaining paralysed for life.

But the attacks continued for the next three consecutive days. On Wednesday morning a grenade launched from the second storey of a building onto a 12-man US marine unit, wounding five, led to the release by the Pentagon of a letter, sent before the latest incident, by General Robert Barrow, the general commander of the American contingent of the MNF. In it he accused Israel of committing deliberate and recurring violence against both US marines, UN observers and civilians, in areas out-of-bounds to Israeli forces, as a "part of a systematic campaign to undermine the presence of the peace-keeping forces." That same afternoon, a new incident took place, without

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OPINION

Israeli 'Arabists': The Damage Done

by Amos Elon

The hall at the Van Leer Institute was too small for all the attendees. Some people gathered on the steps in the corridors; others stood in the doorways. What attracted so many scientists — university orientalists, military intelligence personnel, and the media — who pretended to know a lot and perhaps everything — to such a symposium? What kept them in their seats from the early hours of the morning until almost midnight — curiosity? Controversy in the field? A healthy intellectual open-mindedness? Lack of self-confidence? Or confusion? Aleuph Hareven, who hosted the meeting, quoted Dean Rusk, a former US Secretary of State, who once said, "If you are confused, you should be encouraged because you are in touch with reality."

The topic was formulated in a clever and ironic way: How can we learn what we don't know about the Arabs? Really, how? Once we were relatively open to the issue while the Arabs were totally closed, but now it seems that they are open to learn about Israel and many of them are studying Hebrew and Jewish history, but we are more closed in on our own language, religion and history. The continuous conflict has frozen both our consensus and our fears. What we don't know about the Arabs is often what we don't want to know. Sometimes our ignorance is camouflaged by an idea. Once we had an idea about Egyptians — which led to a war with a terrible price in lives. Today we have a no less frozen idea about the Palestinians. We want to be occupiers while maintaining the feeling that we are still the victims.

Lately, Yitzhak Rabin has raised doubts about the experts in Israeli military intelligence, claiming that they were mistaken in their basic evaluations concerning Arab intentions in the last 20 years; they didn't predict the wars of 1967 and 1973. On the other hand, in 1977 they predicted that the conflict would be intensified leading to a war by the end of the 70s. Instead, (then-Egyptian President Anwar) Sadat flew to Jerusalem and signed a peace treaty with Israel. The intelligence experts were not the only ones who were wrong in their assessments. Actually, they reflected the consensus shared by the Arabists in the universities and in the media. Some people explained these mistakes by the fact that these Arabists are alienated from their field of expertise. This alienation results from, first of all, their distance from their subject, both in a physical detachment and in the lack of experiential quality in their data. The distance also derives from obsessive curiosity which is a product of the conflict, and from empty expressions in the newspapers at the expense of deeper and more significant social and cultural expressions. In such a situation, many optical illusions have been created, the fruit of unexamined information, which is the demonology of people under siege.

It's been said that the Israeli Arabists are enslaved to texts, overly attached to the written word. But actually, they have been overly attached to the regime. For most of them, their first steps as orientalists were in the Amman (military intelligence), the General Security Servies or the Mossad. Others did their reserve service with those organisations. There's a reciprocal and mutual relationship between themselves and the establishment. This relationship is demonstrated by the free exchange of data, in research budgets, and in the creation of public service jobs for these people. The orientalists competed among themselves for the goodwill of the establishment. It was a fatal closeness between these academics and the frozen prejudice of the political leadership. In the shadow of this closeness, the Arabists were unable to formulate a learned opinion about, for instance, Egypt — good or bad — as they might have been able to do so on a more purely academic subject like the opera *Aida*.

* * *

Some of the malaise was reflected in the discussions in the symposium. Some of the main participants said very difficult things about themselves and the field. Professor Harkabi, himself a former head of Military Intelligence and past advisor for ministers and prime ministers, has had a very pessimistic thesis about Israeli-Arab relations and about the Arabs' hatred of us which he once described as a semi-metaphysical thing, which is unchangeable at least in this generation. Since then, in the light of new facts, Harkabi has come to be known for his new evaluations and opinions about the possibility of reaching peace with the Arabs and the Palestinians. Harkabi claims that it is not enough to collect and accumulate data (which is the main occupation of Arabists in the espionage system and in research institutes). The real test is the integrative ability. There's a difference between knowing and understanding. It's always difficult to judge a foreign society from a distance, especially when a painful conflict separates you and the other society. In such cases, the mission is very difficult if not impossible. There is a blindness of involvement. There is no pure empiricism. The particular is understood from the general and the attention given some particulars is always conditioned by a theory. Many Arabists who served in the military intelligence were used to reading and manipulating information. Yet, in order to reach the truth, it is necessary not to manipulate facts, but rather to communicate with the other culture.

Meir Amit, former head of the Mossad, complained that many Israeli Arabists are originally from Arab countries. He knows that such a statement will cause him trouble because it sounds anti-Sephardic. But knowing that, he said that it is important to mention this fact because a person's background influences his research, at least emotionally, and not necessarily in a positive direction. Despite the fact that these Arabists came from Arab countries, they did not live with Arabs, but next to them; and not in the era of Arab independence, but rather in the era of colonialism.

The harshest criticism, which included self-criticism, was the lecture of Professor Shimon Shamir who came to the symposium from his current research centre in Cairo. Shamir questioned whether the researchers' understanding of the Arab society was any more valid than that of ignorant people or hobbyists. The orientalists' information has not prevented them from accepting incorrect assessments about Arab society. The fact is that in issues like peace or war, withdrawal or expropriation, Egypt or Lebanon, the PLO or Palestinians, the orientalists' views are as diverse as the general public's. Professor Shamir believes that mastery of the Arab language is not a guarantee to understanding Arab society. He claimed that the most surprising generalisations he had ever heard came from people who spoke Arabic. In contrast, he encountered understanding and open-mindedness from visitors on the streets of Cairo who didn't speak a word of Arabic. The current premise that a lack of direct, personal contact with Arabs in their countries prevents deep understanding also does not always withstand the test of reality. He thinks the personal meetings with Egyptian society has produced different assessments from people in line with their differing theses. Hawkish people in Israel come back more hawkish. Doves come back more dovish. He who looked for fanaticism, aggressiveness and hatred towards Israel, found them. And he who looked for openness, a desire for peace, easygoingness and humour, found them too. Everyone found his Egypt. The obstacles to our understanding Arab society, Shamir claimed, are often to be found in the structure of our character which falsifies the picture. "The spiritual powers which are the products of our self-image are stronger than any process of systematic thinking." Balzac expressed the same idea when he wrote, "To understand reality as it is, is only possible intuitively. It is an act both of will and of feeling." (Translation: Haaretz, 28. 1. 1983)

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Multinational Forces

casualties this time, between US soldiers and Israeli patrols trying to get into east Beirut.

Again the following night, three more attacks on different gatherings of the Italian contingent were registered. In one of these an Italian team was fired upon at close range by three or four occupants of a van stationed inside Shatila camp. As the Italians returned fire, the occupants of the van, which was later discovered to belong to a Lebanese breadshop owner in Hamra, escaped. The episode contained all the elements for the identification of the perpetrators of these attacks. Hence, after announcing that it had arrested the assailants, the Lebanese police quickly declared a few hours later that they had been released. A mystery continues to surround the fate of a Palestinian, Adnan Ahmad Hamzeh, who had been hospitalised that same night with serious gunshot wounds in his arms. Suspected by the Italians to be one of the assailants at first, as having been in the van and identified by the owner of the van as the "friend he had lent the car to," he was, however, completely exonerated by the Lebanese, who accused the Italians of "excessive nervousness." The next day, however, Ahmad's mother announced to the Italians the disappearence of her son from the hospital, and asked for their help to trace him. The question arises, of course, of how and why the Lebanese military, who had taken pretext from the series of incidents to arrest no less than 320 persons in huge roundups throughout south Beirut and who for months now have been patrolling the Palestinian camps and arbitrarily arresting civilians under all kinds of excuses, have this time wanted it to protect their armed men in Shatila.

But the answer did not have to wait long. Following the three days of fire exchanges, and amidst escalation of aggravation by a US military spokesman, marine commander James Mead, regarding constant Israeli harassment of MNF personnel, on Sunday, March 21, the Lebanese army and security forces returned to destroy the homes of Palestinians in Burj al-Barajneh, leaving many families roofless again. The day before, the Phalangist French language daily *Le Reveil* editorialised: "It is necessary to destroy Palestinian camps in Lebanon systematically and definitely, until these laboratories of crime, these hideouts of criminals, these terrorist nests disappear from the face of the earth." The same words appeared in the same Phalangist paper on the eve of the massacres of Sabra and Shatila.

Double Game

In the light of these facts, the offensive against the presence of the MNF in Beirut seems indeed to bear the marks of a well-coordinated campaign by both the foreign occupation forces, intent on creating a situation in which they will not only stay in Lebanon but have a free hand to operate as they wish, and by the Phalangist power, interested to liquidate the Palestinian presence in Beirut and in Lebanon, and which receives a full cover from a government which plays a double game: It wants the MNF to stay, because its own existence depends on the presence of these forces; but it also wants to be suaded from granting Palestinians even that minimum protection which has until now made it impossible to expell all of them.

But it is still up to the Western governments, especially those participating in the MNF, to uncover the provocation tricks, and put an end to a situation in which the lives of their own citizens and soldiers risk being more and more seriously threatened. How? Very simple: by decreeing serious sanctions which will force an Israeli retreat and by accepting and forcing the Lebanese regime to accept that the presence of the MNF be explicitly tied to links of promulgation of an internationally guaranteed status for the Palestinian population in Lebanon, until such time as the global solution to the question of Palestine be realised.

LAND RESERVED FOR MILITARY TRAINING

Um Al-Fahm Farmers Fear Agricultural Land Confiscation

by Awad Abdel Fattah

Um al-Fahm's last 35,000 dunums of agricultural land is in imminent danger of confiscation, residents fear. Since 1982 the Israeli authorities have not issued any permit for landowners to enter these lands, declared closed in 1957 and reserved for military training.

The threatened land extends over hills seven kilometers to the north of Um al-Fahm, the largest Arab village within the 'green line' About 60 percent of the land is olive groves and the rest almond orchards and wheat, barley and lentil fields.

First news of feared confiscation came towards the end of the last year when landowners saw army excavators enter their land, set up dirt barriers in their fields and uproot several trees. They immediately petitioned the High Court in Jerusalem and the army withdrew implantations after three days' work.

The Story of the Land

Ruha, the name of the area concerned, became the only source of livelihood for the village after the Israelis took all its land in the Lajoun area in 1948. The Lajoun area had the most fertile land in the Triangle, Um al-Fahm residents say. From the village's 140,000 dunums, only 40,000 remained after that grab. Before '48 little attention was paid to Ruha, "because we had enough fertile land in Lajoun, we did not cultivate Ruha lands regularly," one landowner said.

In 1957, however, Ruha was declared a closed area by the Israeli army. The closure order was followed by a series of measures against the Palestinian farmers. In the same year, the Israeli authorities organised a mass arrest of all Um al-Fahm farmers. They were held for two days. "It was just an intimidation of the population," said Abu Farid, landowner and member of the local council. He added that the Israelis wanted to smooth the way for implementing their "plan against our remaining land."

The densely populated village of Um al-Fahm. Overcrowding is not the only problem facing area residents; farmers fear the confiscation of surrounding arable land for Israeli military purposes.

Shortly afterwards, landowners appealed to the High Court to cancel the closure order. The court issued an order forcing the army to give permits for the population to enter their lands, and the closure order was left in force. Since then, the landowners have been entering their land with permits, while military maneuvers take place nearby. There has been a steady stream of gunshot and land mine injuries among the population of Um al-Fahm since.

After 1967, farmers started an intensive olive-growing programme. A few years after the war, the Israeli agriculture ministry noted that 30,000 trees had been planted in Ruha. "Unless we planted trees," said Abu Farid, "the Israelis would have easily confiscated the land." He says that the olive planting has continued since 1967.

In conjunction with the tree planting, there has been a programme of land reclamation. Abu Farid's father, an octogenerian, reclaimed 40 dunums by using a bulldozer for some sections but the major part he cleared by hand. In 1980, he planted land with trees. Abu Farid said that the fact that tree planting and land reclamation were taking place just 100 meters from military camps, "astonished the Israelis."

The Israelis have tried to stop the rapid expansion of the orchards. Last summer tanks drove into an olive grove destroying many trees. In 1977 there was a similar operation. No compensation was ever paid to owners for the destruction of the trees. Residents also complain of military exercises held close to their houses. These have left dozens of people wounded and maimed over the years. 'Stray' bullets hit houses and people. Two months ago such a shot killed a young man in his home. "The Israelis want to break the determination of the population to stick to their land," one landowner said.

Permits Only on Holidays

Now the Israelis are refusing to give free entry to farmers. Riyad Anis told *Al Fajr* that earlier in March the army authorities sent him a letter in reply to his demand that farmers have free access. According to the letter, farmers will only be allowed to enter their land on Fridays, Saturdays and Jewish holidays. Application forms were attached to the letter. They include a clause that farmers bear responsibility for anything that happens while they work their land. Furthermore, the state of Israel will not be responsible for anything that happens to the land and, according to the permit, farmers will be held responsible for any "damage made to the property of the state."

Riyad Anis explained that "according to these conditions farmers are required to make legal concessions on their land. Their lives will become very cheap." .....

Meanwhile, the local council is seriously following the issue. It has formed a follow-up committee to deal with the problem and take steps to oppose it. "We have recruited the whole population in our struggle against the closing of the land," said Abu Farid, "we have to defeat the attempt to leave us completely without land."

Palestinian Documentary Film on Tour

by Daoud Kuttab

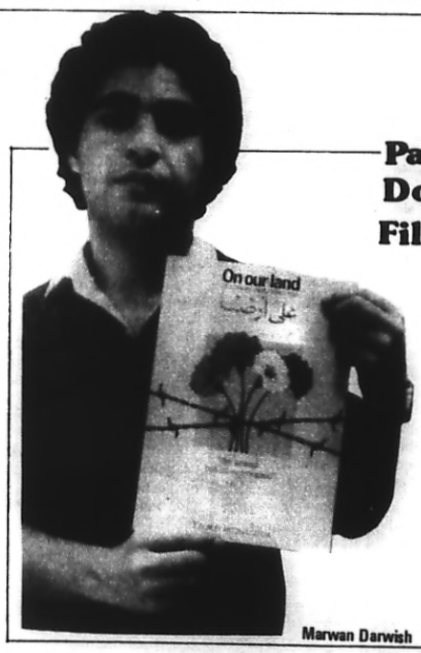
British television viewers were treated March 14 to a 52-minute award-winning documentary on the conditions of Palestinians living in Israel.

The film, *On Our Land*, focuses on the problems of Palestinians who are 'citizens' of Israel in the Triangle, Galilee and the Negev. It concentrates on the everyday life of Palestinians in Um al-Fahm, the largest Palestinian village in Israel, and graphically compares its development with that of a nearby kibbutz. It shows Israel from the Palestinian vantage point as an apartheid state.

On Our Land was made with the help of the *Abna' al-Balad* (Sons of the Country) movement, which has a strong base in the village. Activists in the movement spent two years researching and shooting the film with director Antonia Caccia.

Marwan Darwish, assistant director and resident of Um al-Fahm, spoke to *Al Fajr* about the production and outside reaction to the documentary. He recently returned from an extensive European speaking and film tour.

After its premier in April 1982 in London, Darwish took the documentary to universities, clubs and solidarity committees throughout Europe. After each showing he would speak and answer questions about life in Palestine under Israel, which Darwish said would sometimes last until late night. Many of the questions, Darwish said, seemed "ignorant of even the presence of Palestinians inside Israel, let alone understanding the discrimination we face."



Marwan Darwish

Film Awards

In addition to a tour of England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Norway, Denmark, Italy, Mexico and Canada *On Our Land* won first prize for best documentary film at the Leipzig Festival in East Europe. It was also awarded the top PLO prize for best film on Palestine at the Tunisian film festival in October 1982.

The film has also been broadcast on Sweden and Jordan TV and on the British Independent Channel 4 television station. UPI in London reported March 13 that great pressure was put on the BBC Channel 4 director by Zionist groups to cancel the film's showing.

During his tour, Marwan gave many radio, newspaper and television interviews and noted 'a real change in the European opinion about Palestinians." He credited the extensive publicity of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon as the chief cause of Europe's increased awareness.

Darwish has harsh words, however, for Arab 'concern' for the situation of the '1948 Palestinians.' "Despite the many Arab dignitaries who saw the film, we could not raise enough money to buy a badly needed ambulance for our village." He complained that many Arabs from the Gulf states did not realise that there are in fact 600,000 Palestinians living inside Israel. Marwan Darwish and *Abna' al-Balad* movement are continuing their public showing of *On Our Land* to as many people as possible. A video cassette of the film has allowed the film to be shown to local audiences in homes and clubs.

Future plans call for a new film with Antonia Caccia to illustrate the general discrimination between Arab and Jew in Israel.

On Our Land was produced by Octagon films and funded by the American Palestine Fund.

Ansar Prison Camp: Burden for Israel

The following article, published as a three-part series by *Al Hamishmar* is an example of a 'liberal' Israeli journalist's miscoverage on Lebanon today. Casting about for some angle on the current situation that makes 'Zionist sense,' writer Israel Zamir seems simply melancholic in the first piece about the disappearance of friendly Lebanon and worried about Israel's soldiers.

In the next two pieces on Ansar camp, Zamir, after saying that truth' is somewhere between the Israeli army's description of conditions and that of the prisoners, never gets to the middle. So steeped in propaganda is he that he cannot pull himself out of the middle Hence. the tents are well-heated and large, prisoners well-clothed and well-fed, protest action a ploy of 'higher-ups', medicines aplenty for sick prisoners -in other words, a benevolent concentration camp Zamir seizes upon the soft issue of the imprisoned ill and maimed and calls for their release - presumably satisfied with his government's treatment of the over 5000 other POWs.

***Al Fajr* learned a different picture this week of detention conditions from a Palestinian recently released from Ansar. He spoke of interrogation pits, round-the-clock beatings, starvation tactics psychological torture and no medical care.**

Ansar prison camp

by Israel Zamir

The Smiles Have Disappeared

Everyone has his own Lebanon in his heart. In the sultry days of last July, soldiers were received with rice and sweets. One tall dark man from Aley came to the soldiers with a tray in his hand and offered the thirsty soldiers coffee and water, telling them, "It is hot, you should drink from this." He was thanked for his hospitality by the soldiers who eagerly drank what they were offered.

Not far from this place was a shop which sold watches and tape recorders to the soldiers who gathered in front of its doors. They were treated like kings in Nabatiya, Hasbaya and Beirut streets. Lebanese cars on the streets stopped for the victors, for the 'liberator' of their country from the PLO.

All this is part of the past. Today to stroll down Lebanese streets means to risk your life and you will never know from where the bullet will come. Today every soldier who crosses Fatma Gate by Metulla is double-checked to make sure he has all the arms he should carry and a helmet on his head. They also check to see that every second soldier in a group has a wireless.

Nabatiya is a town with 60,000 inhabitants. Last time we came here with Major Haddad. Hundreds of dignitaries from all the Shi'ite villages in the area came to receive him, it was a ceremonial event — semi-royal. Nabatiya and the other villages promised to join Haddad forces, and to kill every PLO soldier trying to enter the area.

The Bus Was Burned

But since then much water has streamed from Beaufort Castle to the Litani River. Today you drive fast in Nabatiya streets and don't stop to buy watches or tape recorders. A helmet on your head, your whole body covered with arms, you pray to get home unharmed. People in Nabatiya are not friendly anymore. Looks of hatred and curses follow you, when you try to pass a vehicle on the road. You never know from where you will be attacked, when you drive as part of a military vehicle group. You don't allow yourself to close your eyes. Travelling in a bus is no longer a pleasant trip when you have to watch the road. You pass by charming views, but your heart is not open to enjoy it. They are driving very fast, as fast as possible, to come home to Metulla.

Lebanon has changed its face, its friendly attitude has disappeared. "Terrorists" [PLO fighters — ed.] hide to surprise soldiers on their way home. Last week a few buses drove to Israel. One of them had a flat tire and the driver had no spare (Isn't that strange?). The soldiers were moved to other buses and they left the empty bus on the road. On the same night, unknown vandals burned it. The next day we found the stinking tires and the hull of the bus.

The Israeli army makes every effort to prevent unnecessary losses. Soldiers who don't carry all their arms are charged, soldiers who don't go in groups are fined. Despite these measures, I noticed a lot of carelessness. Many times I saw so-called heroes not following instructions, believing, "It won't happen to me." In front of one Nabatiya shop, a military jeep stopped and the soldiers went to buy electronic items. When we explained to them that it was dangerous, they looked at us and smiled sarcastically. We asked an MP who passed by to force the soldiers to leave, but they said, "It's their business if they want to get shot," and they disappeared.

A Nervous Country

At a roadblock by Metulla, they don't check the soldiers coming from Lebanon like they used to. The regular army soldiers know that they have already bought their Sony Walkmans. But their attitude toward the reserve soldier is more suspicious. Explained one person at the roadblock, "Anyway, soldiers most fear an ambush by unknown persons more than they fear military orders." That's probably why they don't stop to shop anymore.

Lebanon of February 1983 is a muddy, snowy and drowning country. Destroyed streets, water and mud on the roads which nobody bothers to restore. The days are over when the IDF will restore the streets. The winter in Lebanon is destructive, plaster is swept away from the houses, the streets are swept too, from the flood waters and thick mud which covers them.

The beautiful, polite, young Lebanon has disappeared. It became old before its time. We find now a mourning Lebanon, broken and bitter, which takes every stranger for an enemy, a conspirator. Anyone not from your community is your enemy and you'd better be careful with him and keep a distance.

Lebanon is a nervous country, its people are suspicious. The smiles and laughter have disappeared. If you don't have to, don't go to Lebanon these days. In this country, bullets come from ambushes, and killing is permitted.

A PLO Officers Academy

Compounds, compounds, barbed wire, observation towers, rain mixed with snow, thick mud. A military vehicle drives around and around, non-stop, twenty-four hours a day. Huddled soldiers in yellow winter coats face the fence, their fingers on the triggers of their machine guns. Not far from here, a jeep patrols.

Ansar camp, February 1983, eight-and-a-half months into the Lebanon War.

Here Ansar becomes a myth, and whoever has not been there has never learned a lesson in hating Israel so deeply, a hatred which will boil in his heart till the end of a generation.

An urgent call on the wireless says that Jamil from Compound No. 17 lost consciousness, and had an epileptic attack. They urgently ask for a physician. In a minute an ambulance gets ready and leaves for compound 17. The compound 'mukhtar' and a male nurse from the "detained" wait by the gate. (Here they call them "the detained" because they are not considered prisoners of war. War prisoners are people with a homeland and thus calling them POWs means recognising the PLO). The nurse carried the unconscious man wrapped in a blanket on his shoulder. They laid him in the ambulance, his hands and feet shivering. The physician checked him, looked into his file, and gave him an injection. Slowly, slowly the man stopped shivering, and relaxed. The male nurse and the Israeli physician took him back to the door of the compound and from there his friend took him. The 'mukhtar' said *"Shukran, doctor."*

A heavy rain falls all the time. Cold weather which freezes the bones. The ambulance drove back. A few minutes later another 'mukhtar' from another compound called for help, and again the scene repeated itself.

300 Chronically Ill Blind or Lame

There are 5600 "detained" prisoners in Ansar, most of them from the first days of the war in June 1982. According to one Israeli testimony, there are more than 300 cases with chronic illnesses and the list of illnesses is long — diabetes, asthma, stomach ulcers, sexual diseases in advanced stages. Some are lame, blind or deaf and dumb, and there are dozens of cases of mental illnesses. Two of them put feces on their meals and eat it. One of the "detained" who was paralysed in the lower half of his body after he was shot by the Israelis in his back, stayed a few months in an Israeli hospital, and when he recovered from his injury, came back to the camp in a wheelchair. His friend takes care of him all day. One of the physicians, describing his situation, said that from a mental point of view he is dying. He weighs only 40 kg and will not survive much longer. A person listening to my conversation with the physician said, "There is a guy here without a right hand... but how can we let him go? He is a major in Fatah."

Why don't they let these 300 men go? Could they possible harm anyone? Everyone shrugs his shoulders. Can the blind, the lame, the mentally ill and the rest on the list harm the security of the state of Israel?

Ariel Sharon once gave an order not to free anyone without his signature. Why? How? Everyone shrugs. As we know, Sharon left. Is it possible that the new Defence Minister will show more flexibility and more understanding for the suffering of those men?

The compounds function in a military framework. Every compound has its 'mukhtar' and a high committee. King Hussein's ex-wife's husband is the head of the joint high committee representing all the compounds. The joint committee meets with the Israeli commander and brings its complaints to him. The IDF commander doesn't interfere in the internal issues in the camp. The 'mukhtar' and his officers keep order and discipline. All the "terror organisations" [PLO organisations ed.] are represented in Ansar with their own people and administration. Here you see a council of national unity, but every organisation keeps its independence and dignity. The food they get is very good and no one complains about it. One physician said that some men gained weight.

According to this physician, in addition to the food, they get expensive and sometimes rare medicines. "At our hospitals [in Israel] to get some medicine you need the approval of the head of the Department, but here they get everything they ask for. Does it make sense that 200 men ask weekly for a thousand antibiotic tablets?" According to this physician the cost of medicine is millions of shekels.

The tents are big and well-heated all day. Soldiers and guards live in the same kind of tents. The clothing is warm. The Israeli army, with the Red Cross, supplied them with winter clothes which are no different from the clothes prisoners inside Israel get. But some men who are not used to this clothing prefer to walk with slippers and without socks. In the cold hours, they gather in the warmed tents and only when they go to eat or out for the walking hour, do they dress with warm clothes.

Talking to the Red Cross employee, I discovered that they don't have any complaints about the material situation, but they suffer mentally which is accompanied by depression, nervous behaviour, and internal quarrels. The feeling of uncertainty eats away at them.

From one observation tower on a sunny day, you can see 5000 men walking 50 meters back and forth, back and forth. They walk in pairs, or three or four together. And none of them see the end to this daily march which has lasted now eight-and-a-half months. Most of them have beards and mustaches. Their clothes are worn out. Some of them sew "panchos" for themselves from the blankets they get. A minority use the cloth which they get from the Israeli army but the rest prefer to remain independent.

They Torture Us

The guard on the tower, a youth in the regular army, looks at them indifferently and doesn't understand why the Israelis keep them here. Once he asked his commander who told him that it's an order and that's it, and don't argue. A sea of men, moving, full of energy. Some are bald, others are young, maybe 14 or 15. A surge of bodies moving back and forth.

One Israeli physician, a new immigrant from the USSR said, "They simply torture us. In Russia, a prisoner would never get such treatment. They call us on every headache or scratch. Among them are also physicians. I talked to some of them. Most of them studied medicine in third class medical schools. Those who study in the republics beyond the Ural mountains can graduate from the university without learning anything. I know a physician here from Gaza who studied there and he doesn't even know how to write in Latin." "And how did they pass the exams?" I asked him. "They come from the Middle East to study medicine and belong to the 'progressive forces' — Do you think that anyone dares to fail them in the exams? Teachers and students know that." "And what about the male nurses?" I asked. "Their knowledge is almost zero. In the best cases, they worked as dish and floor cleaners in the hospitals. But there is one physician who studied in the West. He is OK. He works freely in the compounds, sees patients and orders medicine. But the list of the medicines ordered is a scandal! I don't understand the liberal attitude Israel gives to these murderers."

The Red Cross personnel are usually in Ansar and if there are some problems with the Israelis, the "detained" hurry to complain to them. The issue they always have to settle concerns supplies, and usually they get what they want. They get *Al Anba'* [An Israeli governmental newspaper in Arabic] and *The Jerusalem Post* every day.

The salary of the Red Cross employee is US $5000 a month. They make a careful evaluation of the situation in the camp and according to one of them, "The material situation here, compared to Biafra or Vietnam, is better. There we had to supply basic food. But material needs are not everything." But still they don't understand why the Israelis keep the 300 chronically ill men. "If you didn't free people at all, I could understand, but twice a week a bus takes men from here. Why not first free the difficult cases?"

The garbage collector told me that every day he collects tons of food and medicine which wasn't used. He told the commanders who shrug their shoulders. This shows that the orders come from the higher-ups.

A Show for Television

A French TV crew arrived and got permission to film the camp from "the higher-ups." Discomfort spread among the camp commanders. The TV cameramen ordered a "show" — burning of tents, cutting of veins, shouting and running wild. Using the liquid in a pot supplied to the compounds to sterilise the WC, the "detained" wrote slogans in English on the tent such as "Stop the interrogations!" "We want our brothers back," and the cameras filmed away, and how....

An appeal committee is in session. A "detained" is brought in for interrogation. His story is no different from most of the stories. One interrogator told me, "This young man operated with his brother in Tyre." The youth said that he graduated from the UNRWA high school. They came and took him, and he doesn't know why. He never joined any organisation, but the interrogators didn't buy his story. The TV camera takes pictures of the interrogator and the Druze translator. Which script will be added to the film? What music will accompany the film? All this will be decided according to the director's political views. It is possible to show in the film an Israeli physician treating one of the "detained." It is possible to show the warmed tents and to show the prisoners well-dressed. But it is also possible to show them with worn-out clothes, to show the man without hands or legs, demonstrating and shouting, the barbed wire, the tough Israeli soldiers with guns in their hands. Anything is possible. The one scenario is true, but the other is also true. The truth lies somewhere in the middle.

Every night, the PLO officers arrange *hafla* (parties) and the roar of their songs tears through the night. Sometimes they roar with anti-Israeli slogans. One night, they tried to burn one of the tents, but vigilant guards succeeded in stopping the attempt. It was one more storm in a teapot, but the next morning, the newspapers wrote that two compounds were totally burned, and the border guard soldiers called for help.

Palestinian prisoners in Lebanon, June 1982

The Prisoners and Guards Hope for A Quick Solution

One day of releasing prisoners from Ansar. Already from the early hours of the day, wives, mothers, and children gather in front of the military governor's office in Tyre and Sidon. They wait long hours in the cold weather hoping that their dearest will be released and come home. The redeeming bus stops already in front of the Ansar offices, with twenty-six "detainees" sitting in the bus. Their faces are serious and pale. There is no joy, no happiness. Is this an order from above? Perhaps they don't believe that they will be freed, and might instead be taken to one more interrogation. They will not believe it until they see their relatives. They seem to be indifferent, sort of accepting their destiny. If you are released today, it means you should have been freed also yesterday, one month ago, half a year ago. If they are innocent, why did they spend all these days in the camp?

They go home, to what? To their wives? To the PLO? Are they today PLO supporters? Will they stop cooperating with the PLO? They stayed for a long time in Ansar. They told me, "Ansar is a high and intensive academy of the PLO." Here they experienced "brainwashing" and he who wasn't a PLO member before his imprisonment today will have the diploma of the committed PLO officer." They say, "a third of the prisoners didn't belong to the PLO, but they cooperated in one way or another with them." But today they are full members in the PLO. Beside one of the compounds stood one isolated tent with tens of young men in it. All of them were freed from Ansar, but were brought back again. It seems that they passed the course successfully.

How Much Does It Cost?

How much does Ansar cost the people of Israel? One senior officer estimated the cost at one million shekels a day — for food, medicine, and fuel. But he didn't include the overhead, installations, personnel, and other costs. One soldier, whose job in civilian life is accountancy, said that one million shekels a day is nothing here. But who is able to estimate the suffering and moral damage, the mental damage caused to these 5600 "detained"? Is it possible at all to estimate it?

They told me that they hold Ansar prisoners as a ransom to free the Israeli prisoners. But if we released the chronically ill who number over 300, wouldn't we still have enough prisoners to exchange? Why keep the handicapped, the blind, the lame, those ill with sexual diseases, the mentally ill? No one can tell you why, and everyone points to the higher ranks.

Not only are the "detained" frustrated, but also their guards. Everyone wants to see the end.

In the camp today are 1000 Lebanese, 3500 Palestinians, and a thousand foreigners, whose countries don't want them. What to do with these huge numbers? Do we have to agree to exchange them with our prisoners? Once freed, where should they go? To Tyre and Sidon to help the PLO rebuild itself in Lebanon? Or should we send them to Southern Lebanon where the Shi'ites and Haddad people are waiting to massacre them, a massacre for which we will be blamed?

One person pointed to a report in a newspaper saying that Kreisky is ready to accept the 3500 Palestinians in Austria. But what about the others? The "detained" read the newspapers and they know that the PLO is asking for the 1000 prisoners in Israel in addition to all the prisoners in Ansar. But Israel is ready to free only 800 though Abu Jihad insists on 1000 and promised that the exchange can be completed within twenty-four hours.

Anyway, people here start smelling freedom. They are sure that Israel respects its soldiers' lives and that is why an exchange of eight prisoners will release them all.

The United States, the Arab countries, all the families practice pressure on Israel to free them. And in such an atmosphere, the "detained" see themselves leaving this place as victors, like their brothers who left Beirut.

A day passes, a week, a month. Food trucks, water and fuel containers, gas trucks, ambulances, military cars, jeeps -- all these use fuel and money to spend on Ansar. And the huge bill will be presented to us, the people of Israel, to pay. Rome was defeated also because of economic bankruptcy when it couldn't support its huge empire.

Lebanon eats away at every good part of us — mentally, economically, socially, politically, and militarily, 480 dead, more than 2000 wounded. Maintaining Lebanon and Ansar is a financial burden from all these aspects and it could destroy countries even stronger and richer than ours.

In Ansar, they continue to walk back and forth, to curse and to hate, and to wish that a fire of burning cedars will consume us all to the bitter end.

Stories in the dust of battle

by Salman Natour

Salman Natour, a Druze from Dialet al-Karmel in the Galilee is an editor of *Al-Jadid* literary magazine. Natour has lived the moments of the occupation since 1948 and can therefore penetrate into the mentality of the supporters of war and aggression in Israel. The following are excerpts from *Stories in the dust of battle*, recently published by *Al Jadid*.

The left-wing "Ashafists" (Israeli slang for PLO supporters or members) will philosophise about the "Peace for Galilee" operation... the Israeli pearl of the ages. Let them talk and scream and freak out! Who listens to them? They're all cowards. We told them: "The dogs are barking but the caravan moves on!"

Some idiot professor, all he knows is to jaw. Give him a microphone and he starts screaming: "Stop the war!" His son was a Mirkava tank commander, positioned on a hill overlooking the camp of those animals who walk on two legs, Burj al-Barajneh. Of course today his son's sitting on his ass, writing his PhD in New York. While I'm stuck in this tank, he's sitting on his ass, wearing a grey suit, doing research into history. Then he'll come and teach us what the Israeli people mean. They can go to hell, all these dead fish. They can't teach us what to do in our own state. The one who decides nowadays is the one with the finger on the trigger. One bomb can shut up one thousand professors. When the cannons roll, the intelligentsia fly into thin air, like the shrapnel of a local-made hand-grenade. Good luck to the intelligentsia getting together, till they crack up, then we'll see where they get to.

We are in Beirut. A 65mm rocket was all it took to bring that castle down that was so high before. The professors will choke in their laboratories producing the stink of dead fuses.We've preserved our existence for two thousand years because of men like Bar Kochba and Bar Begin and Bar Sharon, not because of professors whose voices we only hear at demonstrations. I'm a leader in the armoured corps, a great tank-wallah. No dumb smart-aleck is going to tell me I'm not 'heducated.' I got my higher education in the first month of service, when I took a course. Honest. They taught us math and politics and psychology. They even taught us sex... what more do you want?... we're a modern army... first class. In the officers' course, this doctor came from the university to teach us geography. So I asked him: "In Australia, there's a small village called Costra Biro. There's a Jewish family living there, that came from New Hampshire and put up a synagogue."

So he asked me: "How many Jews live in the village?"

I said to him: "Only three. The mother, the father and their daughter."

He asked me: "Are you sure such a village exists?"

I told him: " I know the family, they're a religious family and they go to pray in the synagogue every day."

So he said to me: "I bet you that if there's a family like that there, then I'm ready to pay you the price of a return ticket to Australia to study there for two years."

I went up to him and shook his hand, in front of the soldiers, I said:

"Good luck, doctor, you know every hole on earth."

The soldiers laughed and one of them said: 'The jackass. Three people can't pray in a synagogue. There must be at least nine... to fill the quorum."

There was this leftist lout among them who said: "Since when do we put up synagogues to pray in? We pick a place in the world, put up a synagogue... so that Zahal (the Israeli army) can come and occupy it..."

We all shouted "boo" and swore at him, even the doctor who knew every hole on earth... and every synagogue.

* * *

You can't say everything about this war. We are wrong to believe we can convince the world we are right. The world is wrong to believe it can convince us we are not right. That's the way it is. When we believe, the world is wrong and *vice versa*. They always looked at us differently. We were always different. That's why we've suffered a lot, so why should we be otherwise in this war?

Just between you and me, that's the secret of our existence, because we are "something else." Like in football, you've got to be offside!! Everything's relative. We've learned to do everything we think suitable, that's how we've lasted two thousand years and that's how we built our state.

You tell me: "Purity of arms!" With pleasure!

But, I go to war, with modern military weapons unique in the east, I'm riding my tank and everytime there appears in front of you a 10-year-old bastard carrying an RPG, before you empty the bullets into his heart, you say! "Stop... and think!' Purity of arms! OK. We think: "Shall I cut him down? No, I won't!" The military machinery stops moving, completely paralysed, while you're thinking wild thoughts: "If I empty 50 bullets into his heart, if I wipe him out, what will this crumb of a newspaper man, stoned on hashish with his dirty little goatee beard and his patched jeans say about me?" He says to me: "My name is Frank. Journalist. *New York Times!*" Shall I wait till this journalist empties the bottle of whisky which he takes out of his pocket and drinks, while I pretend not to see the RPG? This bastard will burn me. Me and goatee Frank.

At a time like this, do you want me to think about what traitor Jews like Yossi Sarid will say about me? That coward who ran away from Kiryat Shemona and went to live in Tel Aviv after the first Katyusha was fired at the town? Is it this coward's opinion that will decide the result of the battle? No... no. Every intelligent soldier, faithful to his country, at times like these only thinks about one thing: "This animal walking on two legs, before he lights the fuse he's holding... I'll cut him down with 50 automatic 0-5 bullets... to teach him a lesson for the rest of his life... to lift a hand against us!"

Then you don't think what this one or that one will say about you! Purity of arms. OK. Who said we kill kids? What's the different between a kid of five carrying a bazooka and a man of 40, also carrying a bazooka? We're not fighting human beings, we're fighting weapons and whoever carries them carries the responsibility. Imagine this bastard carrying a bit of ice cream, would you shoot him?

Kids or not they want to finish us off. Imagine this nipper after he grows up. What will he become? Maybe he'll be a tank-wallah or a plane-wallah... Russia will come and give him a T-72 tank or a MIG-29 and King Fahd'll pay his wife a pension... and he'll fly the plane and bomb Tel Aviv! Is that better? Crazy to give him the chance! Cut him down!

Honest if you were me, you'd finish off these bastard terrorists while they're still in their mothers' bellies! Give them a needle... nice and easy... out he slips... finished before he's seven days old... these terrorists can go to hell!

* * *

Why go far? Why swim in a drop of water? We've got a wealth of experience... we are fighting for our existence... who will decide for us what our existence means?

Those journalists from Europe?

The United Nations? Get lost! What does the United Nations mean to us? This is an organisation? Or just talk?

It's a cover-up! A hashish den! Every Monday and Thursday, these emirs come, with crowns of black oil on their heads, their chins covered with black hair too, flying in their private planes with toilet seats made of gold, of course, and baths coated in silver. Nights they spend with the whores of New York, and during the day they meet with old Communists born at the time of the second temple... together with some black Africans who understand nothing about politics... and they sit in the big hall and the head of the United Nations says: "Now the vote against the Jews! Who is for?" and they raise their hands as if they were a Zahal unit carrying out everything the officer orders. Then they return to their slaves and there they become great heroes... they wash the world in oil and the world washes in their propoganda. God, what a scene! And you want us to trust the world?

No... this cock and bull story won't fool us...

1948... We told the world to piss off... and we won.

1956... We said piss off... and we won.

1967... We said piss off and we won.

1973... 1978... and today, we say piss off... and we are winning... when you're strong, you're free.

If we were weak, the world would walk over us. There are 150 million Arabs around us. If they organised a demonstration in Jordan or Syria and got into tractors and came at us from all directions... imagine what would happen to us.

If we didn't have the army and the air force, they'd have mashed us up, they'd have made shish-kebab out of us. *Habibi*, they're like Allah. Give them a chance and the Arabs believe we're weak. Poor things. Until they do anything! When that happens, the warning-sirens start working in Arik's head... and he decides to press the button! He's like a bulldozer! He presses and works the war machinery... the big roller...

Good god, if you'd seen the tanks ploughing across the borders. If you'd seen the row of tanks scaling the mountains, whipping up a trail of dust and smoke, you'd realise what the state of Israel means, what Begin and Raful mean...

Raful... a great man... America wouldn't be ashamed of him if they appointed him leader of the Sixth Fleet. He works miracles. In an hour he'd occupy the whole world. He doesn't philosophise... he's a real peasant... straight like a ruler. If you told him we've got to "exterminate something or other", he'd exterminate it. You tell him: "Raful, forward march..." and it's a great joy for him... he'll go and exterminate everything. If the Americans told him: "Raful, bring us Brezhnev, dead or alive!", he'd say: "Done" and bring him in a few hours, laid out on a stretcher.

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Stories...

continued from page 10

It doesn't matter that I haven't been back home since the first day of the war. Never mind. You don't get the chance to visit Beirut every day. In one week, or two, doesn't matter, honest, Zahal's just great. Once, I used to dream about reaching an Arab city. In 1967, with the strength of Zahal I reached Nablus; 1973, in a tank, the Suez Canal; and today, Beirut! A service-taxi from Tel Aviv. I don't need to go back home, it won't run away, neither will my wife. Of course, she's having a good time, good for her, that's far out. She says: "Real men in the army, enjoying themselves in Beirut with a piece of skirt... I've got the right to enjoy myself in Tel Aviv"... And why not? That's participation in the war effort. She has to collect donations for the army. What a great woman! If I mention "Israel year" to her, she does everything for it. During the Yom Kippur war, we were on our honeymoon... what honey... what f-all? She left home for three weeks. What wouldn't she do for the army? She collected sweets for the soldiers, drinks, hard and soft. She'd come home and collect all the cakes and cigarettes. She gave to the soldiers like she'd give to her own children. I brought home Marlboro cigarettes, and said to her "Shosh, these are for the soldiers!" and she said "Don't worry, they've got enough. You're a soldier too and you deserve to get what they get."

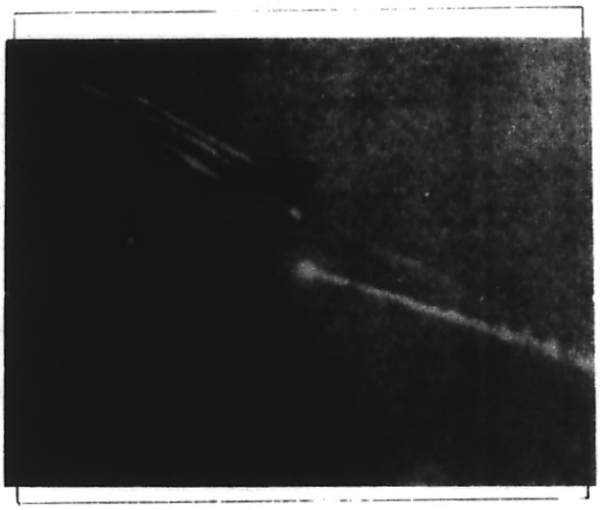
Two days ago, I spoke to my wife on the telephone. The minister of communications brought a telephone truck here, honest. The minister of communications, Zipori, works like he's an army man. What minister would do what Zipori does? He brings a telephone truck and says to the soldiers: "Phone home free of charge!" That's the advantage of having ministers who go to the government straight from the top ranks of the army.

They make men of you in the army. Begin comes and tells them: "Come and I'll make ministers of you." They take off their uniforms and put on smoking jackets. But once a military man always a military man. Black suit and necktie but the mind of a general!

Ehrlich now, he was never a general in the army and I'm sure he can't tell an eggplant from a local-made hand-grenade. If he'd been a general, he'd have brought fresh vegetables and sent raw mutton to the soldiers so they'd fight with an appetite for fighting. That's how it is. That's the problem with these old blokes. Shostak, for example, what can you expect from him? All he can do is swear at the Red Cross. He's an artist at cursing. They all believe him because he's old and because he's the minister of health. But me, I don't understand him. Why does he argue with the world about the number of terrorists killed? Is that the problem, how many were killed?

We'd have liked to get rid of the lot of them. Why be ashamed of it? We went to war to wipe out all the terrorists, so why argue about it today? The world will jump for joy when we announce we've wiped out all the terrorists. Do you want to tell me that the French won't be happy when we wipe out the last terrorist, even in his mother's belly? How many Air France planes have been hijacked in the last 10 years? And the Italians? Won't they be happy?

"Ashaf" is the biggest friend of the Red States. They'll dance in the streets when they hear we've wiped out "Ashaf". In Spain, they'll dance the flamenco day and night, because the Basque terrorists trained with Arafat and then went back to Spain and killed children in the streets. We caught terrorists from Ireland; we picked up a blond one in Tyre. He claimed he was a doctor working in the terrorists' hospital. He came to earn a living, to make money, dollars... but do you believe a terrorist like that?



Have you ever heard about a doctor in England looking for work, for dollars? Which idiot's to believe that? When I picked him up and after a brief interrogation, I called lieutenant Ezra and told him: "Do what you have to do!" Believe me, I don't know what Ezra's methods are, but you can bet he does it good, when he interfogates terrorists like these. Am I supposed to worry about the fate of a mercenary terrorist from Ireland? That's Ezra's job and he knows how to deal with them!

* * *

Before we crossed the border, I got the soldiers together and told them: "We're ready for an operation... it must be clean..." I didn't tell them what I meant by the word clean. I read them the orders for preserving the purity of arms... standing next to me was this TV reporter I know, his father has a plastics shop in the street next to ours. He took photos of all our actions and recorded all my words, one after the other.

I told them: "We're going out to exterminate the terrorists."

In the evening, the TV broadcast those words, straight and clear; forbidden to fire at civilians... the innocent... kill terrorists only. One of the soldiers tried to philosophise and asked me: "What do you mean by terrorist? They're not an organised army... all of them support the terrorists... how should I know who is a terrorist and who is innocent...?"

I said to him: "For God's sake, after 30 years you still don't know who's a terrorist?"

"I look him in the eyes and I know if he took part in the sea-coast operation or not. You can tell them easily, even if they're wearing priest's clothes. They've got the faces of terrorists. Not only their eyes, even the colour of their skin. If you haven't got experience, take a photo of Yasir Arafat and whenever one of them appears in front of you, look at the photo. Looks like Arafat? A bullet in his head. Doesn't look like him? Take him for interrogation without any more philosophy."

The lads were scared, I don't know why! Seems like they couldn't stand war. Every other day they call them up for war. Right, it's tough, but what can one do? We've got to safeguard Nahariya and Kiryat Shemona. Otherwise the Arabs will make mincemeat out of us. I said: "Get your spirits up!"

I gave them this really great lecture; I spoke about everything, just like I was a history professor. I explained them one... two... three... everything about the terrorists who eat human flesh in the streets of Paris and who maybe even appear to be poor things so that the world feels sorry for them and gives them a few dollars and weapons...

Did you know that the Arabs are Israel's biggest treasure? Over six or seven years, they buy weapons for millions of dollars. Then one day, when our stores have run short, Zahal crosses the borders, we kill them and take their weapons and sell them in South America and bring in dollars... so, big deal, some of our soldiers get killed, but what can we do? Many of us get killed in road accidents. Does anyone claim to have protection from the angel Gabriel? God gave our father Moses the 10 commandments, but he didn't give him a life insurance policy...

If we didn't do that, we'd turn into beggars and we'd have nothing to eat...

I told the lads: "We're going on a little excursion to the Lebanese mountains... we'll get to Tyre and Sidon... there you'll find colour televisions, videos, dirt cheap. These Lebanese are loaded with dollars. Whoever stands in the way of our tanks, we'll wipe out, one by one. We'll go back to Kiryat Shemona and tell the people there to come out of the bunkers, no more Katyushas from now on... Can you imagine how they'll welcome us? With flowers and cakes and cheers!

"The girls will be panting for us and they'll kiss us from top to bottom. Poor things, all night in the bunkers with their kids... if we don't save them, who will?

"Will the Americans come to clear up the area?

"America... after what happened to them in Vietnam, they're scared to go into any country. Let them learn from us... we go in and none of us feels a thing... we stay in the area and no force can budge us... we leave when we want... but not till we've cleaned up the area." They listened to me till the last word and I felt that they wanted to applaud. When I saw them in such high spirits, I told them: "Let's go," and we set the tanks rolling and the dust flying. When the orders came to drop the first bomb, I felt relaxed and told them: "Forward..."

Translated from *Al Jadid* by Shirley Eber September 1982.

WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS

The mass poisoning of female students in Jenin and surrounding areas along with the continued unrest in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were the major stories in the local Palestinian press this week.

The continuing curfew placed on the West Bank refugee camps of Jalazon and Dheisheh, the village of Qabatia and the old city section of Nablus were given prominence.

Al Fajr Arabic daily gave the widest coverage of the poisoning case Since the first reports of poisoning in the Arrabeh Girls School, Al Fajr has placed the story on its front page.

Test of Arab Solidarity

After the PNC outlined the limits of political action and defined the framework of solidarity with the Palestinian people as the respect for their decisions and help in implementing them, there is no riddle to be solved concerning the Palestinian stand; neither is any Arab or non-Arab in need of learning about the limits of this stand or to discuss with the PLO the chances of participating in negotiations on the basis of the Reagan plan.

In the view of the Palestinian people, trying to combine the claim to support their interest and lack of support for the PNC resolutions or trying to go round them in favour of the Reagan plan, does not constitute solidarity with their stand.

Thus it would have been better for those Jordanian officials and others who tried to portray the Palestinian position as open to all possibilities and all wagers, to review the PNC resolutions and to confirm 'hat the minimum political action, in the view of the Palestinian people, is the Fez summit resolutions and not the Reagan plan. Their stand, if they do not want to be committed to what they said before the PNC meeting about respect for the independence of the Palestinian decision, must be respect for these resolutions and openness with the United States and Husni Mubarak and others, and not to deal with the Reagan plan.

This stand will strengthen the Palestinian stand and will participate in resisting reactionary American pressure which aims at eliminating the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

The experience of the Israeli-Lebanese negotiations and America's breaking its "promise" to Lebanese officials concerning unconditional Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and its resumption of military supplies to Israel, and Reagan's declaration that the settlements in the West Bank do not contradict the Camp David accords, reveal clearly to the Arab people the truth of the Reagan plan and the American intention hidden behind it which is aimed at achieving imperialist hegemony over all the region with the participation of Israel and with the submission of the reactionary Arab regimes. The Palestinian people -- unlike their brothers will not walk along this path because it will not lead to a just solution nor to a lasting peace.

AL TALIA
March 24

Impotence!

American rewards to Israel do not stop.

After the indifferent attitude to the establishment of new Israeli settlements in the occupied territories comes the announcement of the supply to Israel of 200 new missiles.

Before and after this, various types of support, in all fields, continue to be supplied to Israel. And in response to this, the Arab states continue to bow down, and even lie down, before the United States... here the oil states are paying the price of their policy of serving American interests, for after supplying essential strategic oil reserves to the United States and after refusing to raise the price of their oil, they are now paying the price or, more correctly, their people are now paying the price of the dwindling of budgets and the cancellation of projects.

Washington has made it very clear that it understands nothing, other than the policy of confrontation... it has proved this in Vietnam, in Nicaragua and in Iran... and yet our Arab countries continue their policy of retreat, making the United States persist even more in its hostility to Arab rights.

Do the Arab states understand the lesson?

AL SHAAB
March 25

The Required Credibility

Talk proliferates these days via the TV, newspapers and radio about credibility. Those behind this media campaign are trying to suggest that the US is facing a test and that this either proves its honesty and credibility in what it says, or it confirms its inadequacy and shortcomings.

Such suggestions do not only aim to anaesthetise the Arab people into waiting for an American "cure-all" which will not come, but also puts the American position at a new starting point aiming to abolish all past and present American alignments with Israel.

The news media and those who are behind it are trying to create doubts in the minds of the Arabs as to whether the US role is negative or positive. Thus with the word credibility, they are trying to erase the experience with US policy of the Arab people in general and that of the Palestinian people in particular.

What is required is not to look for American credibility or lack of credibility since the US proved its credibility in its alignment with Israel and hostility to Arab causes; the matter does not call for waiting or interpretation. What is really required is Arab credibility in dealing with partisan America, Arab credibility in putting Arab energies at the service of this unfortunate nation and the credibility of the news media and those behind it in dealing with facts and not mis leading or anaesthetising the people.

AL MITHAQ
March 26

Deadlock and Calculations

Washington wanted the Lebanese-Israeli negotiations to be an example to other Arab states in the region and herald their entry into the Camp David 'arena.' But these negotiations are faltering and have thus far thwarted American calculations on reaping political gains from the Israeli war in Lebanon.

Nobody can disagree that Washington imagined that the war in Lebanon would lead to the military, political and physical elimination of the Palestinian leadership; but this leadership was not eliminated. Despite the temporary blow to the Palestinian forces, the Palestinian apparatus remains intact and is working to full capacity, starting with the PNC, through to the Central Council and the Executive Committee and all other Palestinian institutions and organisations.

During these failed calculations and disappointed dreams, Washington tried, by means of the visits and contacts of special envoy Carter, to grope towards new steps, looking for empty addresses, in a miserable attempt to seek out alternative parties who would take on the responsibility for these foiled calculations and disappointed hopes.

However, even these visits and contacts and the special envoy failed to create "movement" within the occupied territories to save the American endeavour from the definitive fail ure it faces.

Against this background, the resolutions of the 16th session of the PNC which asserted, in a special section on the political solutions in the region, that the Fez plan constitutes the minimum of any political action in the region and decisively blocked any attempt to plant despair among the Palestinians or the attempt to draw the Palestinian people into the American arena which still hopes to get the 'kiss of life' from them.

Under these circumstances, the region is today in a state of deadlock and anticipation and all observers agree that American policy has failed and are trying to look for "action" in the Arab field in general and in the Palestinian one in particular, on the pretext that the Americans are determined to refuse to hold a dialogue with the PLO and that the only way out is "concessions" from the PLO represented by empowering Jordan to enter into the American game in the region.

We ask why the Arabs must retreat from their determination and offer concessions to the US instead of the US being forced to concede its stubborn ness and haughtiness which are the obstacles to a real and just peace in the area.

It is self-deception to imagine that the PLO must give the 'green light' or 'the kiss of life' to disappointed American policy in the region. All interested Arab and international parties must understand that regarding the Fez plan as the minimum of any political action is the official united Palestinian stand to which all factions are committed. The attempt to undermine this stand or to bypass it, is an attempt doomed to failure.

AL FAJR
March 27

PRISONER EXCHANGE DISCUSSED

PLO, Rakah Meet In Prague

After two days of discussions in Prague, delegations of the PLO and the Israeli Communist Party (Rakah) issued a joint statement, March 24, expressing their mutual wish to strengthen and to widen political cooperation for the common cause of a just peace, based on rejection of the occupation and the support of the peace plan adopted by the PNC resolutions.

The two delegations discussed the obstacles imposed by Israel in the course of negotiations for the exchange of prisoners of war.

The Rakah delegation, headed by Emil Habibi, and including politburo members Uzi Borstein, Tamar Grozinski, and Salim al-Qassem, also asked the Palestinian delegation headed by Abu Mazem, Mahmoud Abbas and three other members of the executive committee that the eight Israeli soldiers detained by the PLO since last September be supplied with a special wine and bread for the feast of Passover. The PLO delegation agreed, on one condition: that Israel present this demand officially to the PLO.

The PLO transferred the eight Israeli soldiers it captured in the Beqa'a valley, Lebanon, to Tunisia March 28 after the PLO monitoring department discovered that Israel was planning a military operation to release them.

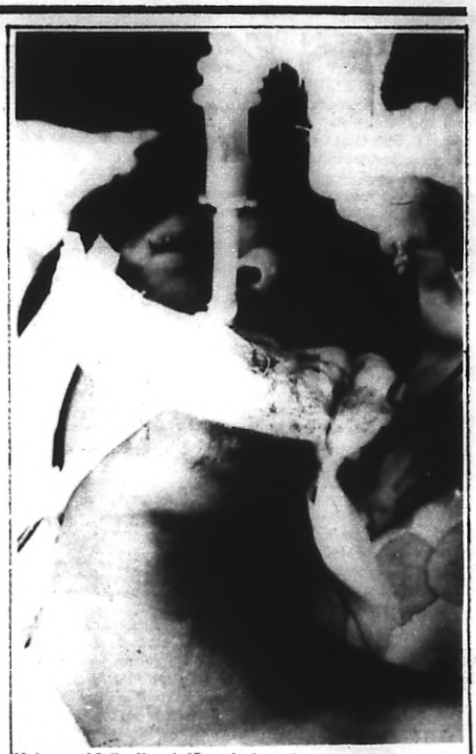
Director of the office of Bruno Kreisky, the Austrian chancellor who is mediating in negotiations between the PLO and Israel, met Ahmad Jibril, the secretary of the PFLP-General Command, whose fighters hold two Israeli prisoners to further the negotiations with the PLO, on March 30 in Damascus. The PLO is demanding the release of several hundred Palestinians and Lebanese held by the Israelis.

The PLO delegation in Prague told the Rakah group that Israel is refusing to directly negotiate on the issue of the prisoners exchange. "We discussed the political aspects of the issue," Tamar Grozinski told *Al Fajr*. "Israel will never recognise the PLO, speak to or listen to anything from the PLO."

Abu Mazen told the Israelis that the PLO appreciates the struggle of the Communist Party and all democratic forces in Israel who are "opposing the barbaric acts of aggression in both Lebanon and Palestine," according to the delegation.

Uzi Borstein, the spokesman of the Israeli delegation, told *Al Fajr* that the results of their talks were very fruitful, "because already the possibility for peace is in the region."

The first meeting between the PLO and Rakah took place in 1977. Since then there have been regular contacts and consultations between the two.



Mohammad Salim Nasrah, 15, under intensive care at Makassed Hospital, Jerusalem. Nasrah was beaten by an Israeli soldier, with an empty bottle to the head March 27. The patient is in serious condition with a brain hemorrhage. Nasrah was transferred to Makassed after the Israeli-run Hadassah Hospital refused to admit him before financial arrangements were made./SF

IN CABLE TO BEGIN

FOREIGN JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION PROTESTS TELEPHONE TAPPING

The Foreign Journalist Association sent a telegramme to Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin protesting the tapping of telephone calls about Lebanon, last week. Beidman Berly, the chairman of the FJA, told *Al Fajr* that the foreign journalists working in Israel asked Begin in the telegramme delivered to him March 23 if it is true that there is a policy to cut into telephone conversations, as he told the Israeli paper *Maariv*. If there is such a policy then the legal rights of journalism are violated, they asserted.

Berly said that during the war in Lebanon there were disturbances on the telephone lines when journalists sent stories and information about military operations in Lebanon. Berly added that the information and news stories which were jammed were military. Berly, the director of the German News Agency, said Begin promised the foreign journalists March 25 that he would "deal with this issue seriously."

Meanwhile, *Al Fajr's* telephone line continues to be interrupted during calls from abroad or from prominent figures such as mayors and trade union leaders.

Palestinians Arrested After Attack On Israeli Land Dealer

The Israeli army arrested seven Palestinians from the Nablus district March 25 in connection with an axe attack on a Jewish settler from Karney Shomron.

Moshe Zar, who is said by Israeli papers to be the biggest land dealer operating in the northern part of the West Bank, was attacked as he left his home at Karney Shomron on his way to a meeting with a local Palestinian. The attacker had apparently hidden somewhere near the house, and attacked Zar as he got into his car. He was struck several times in the neck with an axe and fell in a pool of blood. Before he fled the unknown attacker also used the settler's own pistol to fire a shot, wounding Zar in the arm.

According to the Israeli press, the settler wrote the name of his attacker on a piece of paper and gave it to a gas station attendant after driving to the station. Zar was hospitalised in serious condition.

Later in the day, Israeli army officers arrested the Palestinian resident named in *The Jerusalem Post* as Abu Tafish and his two sons from their home in nearby Jinsafout.

The incident reflects a growing feud between Palestinian landowner farmers and Israeli settlers over land. Israel Radio said that Zar has been charged in the past with illegally buying land from Palestinians.

During the past three years, three Israeli settlements – Ma'aleh Shomron, 1980, Yaqqir, 1981, and Emmanuel, 1982 – were established on land acquired from the Palestinian villages of Jinsafout, Deir Istia, and Azzoun. Residents from Jinsafout complained that the bulk of land transferred to Jewish settlements was sold by a handful of land dealers. Land dealers, who are usually armed with hand guns, use corrupt and underhand means to get the land resident's charge. In one case, dealers acquired the signature of a land-owner on a blank piece of paper, after they told him they would help free his jailed son. Later his land was annexed to Ma'aleh Shomron settlement.

ENVIRONMENTAL TOXICOLOGIST RESPONDS TO AL-FAJR

Need for Intelligent Pesticide Use

Dear Sir:

Your article entitled "Human and Environmental Health and Safety" has a few inaccuracies that need to be corrected and clarified.

Firstly, the article gives the wrong impression that farm produce is contaminated by dangerous pesticides banned in Western societies. Although some pesticides banned in the Western world are in use here, the greater bulk of them are legal for use worldwide. What the article missed to point out is the need to reduce the use of pesticides, as they are creating undue contamination of food and water and playing havoc with the ecology of the area as a whole.

What we need to employ here is a more conscientious and intelligent approach to the use of pesticides, including a reduction in the amounts used. Increased use is creating a vicious cycle in which increased amounts are needed to fight new and/or old but increasingly resistant pests. The use of biological control methods, such as resistant plant species, introduction of natural enemies of the pests such as ladybugs, and the use of pheremone trapping, among others, are to be encouraged as a replacement for pesticides. This would be beneficial to both the farmer and the consumer.

Secondly, an injustice done to the local drug manufacturers needs to be corrected here. It is true that improperly formulated drugs have reached the West Bank markets but it must be clarified that the intent was not malicious, as the article suggests. Also, the idea of duplicating batch numbers, much as it may be plausible, is not true as there is no evidence that such action has occurred.

The local drug manufacturers' capabilities in coming out with a product that meets the most stringent international criteria, needs to be revamped. We at Bir Zeit University are currently working in close contact with the manufacturers to have the university act as a quality control facility to analyse their drugs and make certain they conform to international standards before they are released into the market. The university intends, as a matter of policy, to work with the pharmaceutical companies in various aspects of drug manufacture, including the training of personnel in quality control. The university will also be cooperating with other industries to upgrade the quality of their manufactured product and other aspects dealing with worker safety and health.

A programme in environmental and occupational health sciences has been long overdue in the West Bank. The recent sad events at the various high schools across the country only point to the great need for such an action-oriented programme. We, at Bir Zeit University, are proud to pioneer such a programme that from its inception is working in helping to improve and protect the health of the people against undue exposure to health-impairing situations.

Ramzi M. Sansur, Ph.D.
Director, Programme in Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, Bir Zeit University

March 23, 1983

WHATEVER THEY WANT

TEL AVIV — Israeli extremist group the Guardians of the Temple Mount, intend to hold prayers for Passover and to offer the pascal sacrifice on the Moslem holy site, Haram al-Sharif.

Israeli TV said that the members of the movement intend to make a pilgrimage and to pray in the Haram throughout the Passover night.

The movement informed the Israeli prime minister and defence minister of their intentions.

DEMONSTRATORS SHOT

TEL AVIV - Israel Radio and some Israeli correspondents report that three Lebanese from the village of 'Adloun, 20 kilometers south of Sidon, were wounded when Israeli soldiers opened fire on a protest demonstration on the Sidon-Tyre road.

The demonstrators were demanding the release of Sheikh Raghib Harb, Imam of the village of Hadshit in the Nabatiyeh region, who was detained last Friday.

Reporters said Israeli forces dispersed the demonstrators by firing in their direction leading to the wounding of three persons.

Three demonstrators were wounded in similar circumstances the previous day in the town of Nabatiyeh and in two neighbouring villages.

UM JIHAD

TORONTO -- The US consulate in Toronto has refused to give an entry visa to the US to Intisar al-Wazir, a PLO member who has spent the last two weeks in Canada.

Michael Brown, spokesman for the consulate, said that al-Wazir could not enter the US because she is a member of an organisation banned on American soil.

Intisar al-Wazir is the wife of Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), deputy leader of the Palestinian forces. She is a member of the PNC and of the General Union of Palestinian Women. The Canadian Womens Congress had invited here to visit a number of towns in Canada.

TWINS

NABLUS -- The Najah University Students Union has twinned with the Students Union of the University of Bradford in England. The purpose of the twinning is to strengthen the relations between Palestinian university students and foreign universities. The twinning programme includes exchange visits and activating academic and educational relations.

PARENTS PUNISHED

The military governor in the Gaza Strip has ordered all headmasters of secondary schools in the Strip to summons students' parents and charge them with guarding the schools during school hours.

According to the new order, parents must sign in the time the students enter and leave the school. According to the order, too, those parents who do not come (with their children) will be punished by fines, prison terms or the expulsion of their children from school.

NO PALS

Residents of Deir Jarir in the Ramallah district last week rejected the request of the 'civil administration' for the village mukhtar to meet its representative, Colonel Mizyed Abbas. The residents interpret this request as a new attempt to link their village to the civil administration after the failure to annex it and neighbouring villages to the Village League.

CARVING OUT A LEAGUE

GAZA The military authorities in Khan Yunis have separated the 'Abadleh area belonging to the municipality and have issued an order establishing a local council for it and appointing the council head.

The 'Abadleh area, north of Khan Yunis, is the second area after Samira in which a local council has been set up by order of the authorities.

Residents say that the authorities' step aims to unite local and village councils in the central region in order to impose a village league under the name of the Khan Yunis Village League in the near future, which the residents strongly oppose.

CARTER'S PRESENTS

The Ramallah military court sentenced eleven Ramallah students to six months imprisonment and fined them IS25,000 each for demonstratingand throwing stones at military vehicles during Carter's visit to Ramallah.

BZU PROF RELEASED

The occupation authorities have released professor Adel Yahya from Bir Zeit University after detaining him for a week and after raiding his house in Jalazon camp several times. The authorities also released Bassem Zaki and Farouq Hikmet after detaining them for more than 11 days at Fara'a detention camp.

SOLDIER PROTESTS

A 28-year-old reserve soldier has been sentenced to 25 days imprisonment for refusing to serve on the West Bank.

SO MANY MORE

BEIRUT -- Lebanese army sources said that although the army has been exploding land mines in the region of the sports stadium and the horse-racing track in west Beirut, there are around 18,000 land mines still in Beirut, especially in west Beirut.

WHO HERE HAS GUNS?

RAMALLAH -- Sources at the Ramallah government hospital said that the condition of Mahmoud Issa Abu Rahma and Abd al-Hamid Samara Abu Rahma from Bil'in is steadily improving. The two were recently injured when they were shot by unidentified persons.

APARTHEID AGAIN

The Knesset Finance Committee agreed to amend the law on payments to large Jewish families to exclude Arab families in the Galilee, Triangle and Naqab.

March 24, 1983

OPENING AND CLOSING

The authorities lifted the curfew imposed on Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem two weeks ago following stone-throwing at Israeli vehicles.

Curfews continue on Dhahriyeh and Halhoul and on Jalazon refugee camp near Ramallah.

Israeli sources said that students threw stones at Israeli vehicles in Kalandia camp and the authorities closed the school to which the students belong.

PLO SHIFTS AMBASSADORS

DOHA -- The Qatar newspaper *al-Raya* reported March 24 that transfers and changes in PLO representatives in various Arab and foreign capitals will be carried out soon. An unnamed Palestinian source said that according to these changes, Abdel Rahim Mahmoud has been appointed PLO representative to the Emirates in place of Anis al-Khatib, who is to be transferred to the Damascus office. Mahmoud al-Labadi, former PLO spokesman, has been appointed director of the PLO office in Brussels.

The source added that Ribhi 'Awad, former PLO representative in the Emirates, has been appointed to the Helsinki office after Finland gave the PLO permission to open an office there. Faisal 'Oweida, PLO representative in London, succeeds Nabil Ramlawi, who is to be transferred to Geneva after the former representative there, Daoud Barakat, is to be moved to the Austrian capital, Vienna.

The source also reported that the appointment of a new PLO representative to Kuwait was being studied. The post has been vacant since the assassination of Ali Nasser Yassin and is now being held temporarily by 'Awni Batash. The changes also include other PLO representatives in Latin America, Asia and Africa, but details have not yet been given.

The Palestinian source said that it is likely that changes in the PLO's US office would be within the framework of the PLO's plan to confront Israeli propaganda and penetrate American public opinion.

Unidentified arsonists burned a bookshop, the Jordanian Distribution Centre, on Salah al-Din Street March 28. Owned by Yousef Rahail, the loss has been set at JD55,000./SF

90 RELEASED 50 ARRESTED

BEIRUT The Lebanese press reported that the Israeli authorities released 90 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners being held in Ansar detention camp in South Lebanon. However, they arrested 50 people in a wide-scale operation in a number of villages in the Shouf, south of Beirut.

KIDS STEAL SMOKE BOMBS

The Israeli police arrested three Israeli children aged between 12 and 14 on a charge of raiding an Israeli military camp and stealing hundreds of smoke bombs.

A police spokesperson said that the children admitted taking part in the robbery and that the incident is not only worrying but shocking.

ROADSIDE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

TEL AVIV — Israel Radio said that according to the Beirut newspaper *Al Nahar*, merchants in Sidon are complaining that the Israeli army is purposely delaying them at checkposts on the coastal road, especially at Khalde.

They said that the long checks carried out by the Israeli army is leading to delays in transporting goods from Beirut to Sidon and is forcing them to buy goods from Israel instead.

TV BAN LIFTED

TEL AVIV -- The Israeli High Court lifted the ban on talks on Israel TV with Palestinian personalities from the occupied territories, which had been attacked by Israeli legal autorities.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

TEL AVIV - The "There's A Limit" movement, which works for its members to be excused from military service in Lebanon and for the return of Israeli soldiers from the war there has asked the Israeli army authorities to immediately release soldier Anatol Yablownty who for reasons of conscience has refused to serve in the occupied territories and who is now serving a 35-day prison sentence.

PEACE NOW IN EUROPE

PARIS Avshalom Villon and Avraham Burg said in a press conference held on Thursday in Paris that the Peace Now movement would continue in its struggle for a democratic Jewish state and not to dominate another people, and that the movement would continue its fight against the annexationist policy of the Israeli government which makes Israel a state like that of South Africa. The Peace Now delegation is currently visiting towns in France and from there will travel to Belgium.

SWEAT OVER SWEETS

GAZA Israeli bomb experts blew up a kilo of sweets wrapped

up in newspaper. The 'suspicious' object had been left in the central service station.

March 25, 1983

NO VOLUNTARY WORK

Israeli forces prevented students from the Gaza Strip going to Bir Zeit to perform voluntary work. As students boarded two buses for Bir Zeit, troops took them to the military administration building in Gaza for questioning.

POSTS IN CAMPS

The Israeli army set up military posts inside and near Jalazon, al-Am'ari, Dheisheh and Kalandia refugee camps after recent events there.

The curfew was lifted in Dheisheh while schools in Kalandia were closed after stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles.

ISN'T EVERYONE?

Israeli daily *Maariv* reported that the Foreign Journalists Association in Israel has sent a cable to Menachem Begin, Israeli prime minister,and Moshe Arens, Israeli defence minister, expressing their concern at reports that the military censorship authorities are wiretapping telephone lines used by foreign correspondents.

BOMB IN AIN AL-HILWEH

BEIRUT A powerful explosion occurred in Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp near Sidon. Neither the cause nor whether there were casualties is yet known.

Eyewitness accounts said that the explosion, whose reverberations were heard all over Sidon, took place a few minutes after an Israeli military patrol had entered the camp.

JERUSALEM GRAB

JERUSALEM Israeli bulldozers have begun to open a road approximately 10 meters wide in the area west of Jabal Mukhaber. Bulldozers uprooted a large number of trees and other crops.

NEW TOWN RESTRICTION

The authorities concerned with restriction orders have renewed for a further six months and for the third time the town restriction on Awad Jamal and have demanded that he report twice daily to the Jenin police station.

NO CURFEWS

HEBRON — The two week curfew imposed on Halhoul and Dhahriyeh was lifted. The authorities also allowed all transport to move on the main roads connecting Dhahriyeh, Halhoul and Hebron. The authorities had diverted transport to a side-road passing through Shuyukh and Sa'ir.

SECURITY TRIALS

GAZA — The military court in Gaza sentenced Ahmed Sadeq Barlij, 16, a student at the Khan Yunis Vocational School, to 12 months imprisonment, nine of which are suspended, and fined him IS10,000 or 100 days more imprisonment if he does not pay, after finding him guilty on charges of disturbing public security.

The military court in Ramallah sentenced student Farouq Mohammad Said from Deir Jarrir to four months prison and one year suspended and fined him IS20,000 after accusing him of throwing stones at Israeli vehicles.

PAPER GRAB

Israeli troops confiscated copies of *Al Shaab* newspaper claiming that they were being sent to the West Bank where the Israeli authorities have forbidden the paper's distribution for the last nine months. An Israeli spokesperson said that the Israeli security forces set up special roadblocks after receiving information that the paper was being distributed on the West Bank. The spokesperson added. "a number of accused were detained."

VISIT THE GRAB

A number of Israeli MKs from various parliamentary parties toured Um al-Fahm land known as the area of military maneuvers number 105 and 109 to survey the situation and the reasons for the "opposition" of its owners to it remaining a closed military area.

At the end of the tour, the MKs said that, together with the Israeli defence minister, they were surveying the situation and would ask for the area of military maneuvers to be reduced after it "appeared to them" that over 80 percent of the land was planted.

CAR BLAZE

DHEISHEH Unidentified persons tried to set fire to the car of camp resident Mohammad Hussein al-Atrash. Residents managed to extinguish the fire before it damaged the car.

CHILD HURT IN CRASH

HEBRON — Five-year-old Sufiyan Mohammad Zaloum was taken to Princess Alia Hospital in Hebron after being hit in a collision between an Israeli truck and a private car in the Bab Zawayeh area of town. The police are investigating the incident.

BANANA SABOTAGE

RAMALLAH Unidentified persons opened four banana stores owned by Ali Saman and poured kerosene on the fruit. The police were informed of the incident and have begun to investigate.

CENSUS PREDICTION

JERUSALEM — The central administration for census intends to hold a population census in west and Arab Jerusalem for two weeks from May 22.

March 26, 1983

LAND DAYS

TULKARM Educational sources in Tulkarm have announced that it has been decided to give schools in the West Bank a 'holiday' on Wednesday and Thursday, March 30 and 31.

BETHLEHEM BOMB

BETHLEHEM A device exploded in front of a shop near the police station in the city. Nobody was injured and the explosion caused only minor damage.

UNRWA GETS TO CAMP

RAMALLAH The UNRWA director of operations in the West Bank and a number of employees are surveying Jalazon camp, which has been under total curfew for 4 weeks, with no resupplying allowed.

A declaration from the head of UNRWA said that the agency was doing all it could to provide necessary services to the residents and has sent prepared meals to al-Am'ari refugee camp, also under curfew. The director of operations has decided to distribute supplies temporarily to all camp residents in the West Bank.

LAND DAY MEETS

SHAFA 'AMR — A committee of heads of local Arab councils and the Committee for the Defence of the Land decided in a joint meeting in Shafa 'Amr to hold a regional meeting on the seventh anniversary of Land Day, on March 30, in Deir Hanna for villages of the Galilee, Taibeh for villages of the Triangle, and Tel Sab'a for the Beduin of the Naqab.

The organisers of these regional meetings have obtained permits from the police. The march planned for Thursday afternoon from Sakhnin to Deir Hanna also has police permission.

NO INJURIES

BUREIJ CAMP A bomb was thrown at an Israeli military vehicle, exploding without causing injury, according to local reports. A checkpoint was set up in front of the camp and passing cars searched.

March 27, 1983

MEDALS DAY

TEL AVIV Israeli Premier Menachem Begin decorated Chief-of-Staff General Raphael Eitan with the new 'Peace for Galilee' medal. Eitan decorated top officers and other members of the Israeli armed forces.

WAFA'S NEW HOME

BONN The West German newspaper *Die Welt* said that the PLO has recently opened an information and contact centre in the Greek part of Cyprus.

The German newspaper added that the PLO had transferred the office of the Palestine news agency WAFA to Cyprus and is currently trying to obtain permission to resume transmission from there.

SPECULATIVE HEAD COUNT

According to estimates published by the Israeli defence ministry, the number of Jewish residents in the West Bank by the end of this century will be 450,000 and the population of Israel 7 million.

SAKHNIN DEMO

Unidentified persons set up a roadblock of stones and set tyres alight near the village of Sakhnin in the Galilee. The Israeli police extinguished the fire and removed the roadblock.

The police also discovered a large poster which had been put up above the road leading to Sakhnin from Arrabeh carrying the words 'Palestine Liberation Organisation' written in English.

March 28, 1983

AL FAJR CORRESPONDENT HELD

JENIN The Israeli 'civil administration' authorities in Jenin last night arrested our correspondent, Qaddoura Musa, and held him for several hours. His arrest came following the reports he filed to *Al Fajr* on the events in Jenin, all of which were permitted by the censor in the Arabic paper.

CURFEW — DAY 4

QABATIA — Curfew continued on the village of Qabatia in the Jenin district for the fourth consecutive day following the shooting of Nasri Assad Kmail, 14, at the hands of a Village League member.

NO ENTRY TO STRIP

GAZA — The Israeli authorities announced that as of 2:00 am, March 29, until 12:00 midnight on March 30, West Bank residents will be forbidden to enter the Gaza Strip. As of 1:00 am on Wednesday morning, March 30, for 24 hours, Gaza Strip residents are forbidden to travel to Deir Hanna and Taibeh and Tel Saba', where demonstrations will be held to mark Land Day.

GOLAN ARRESTS

Israeli army forces arrested Druze leader Hussein Zaki from the Golan on a charge of "inciting residents" from the area against the Israeli occupation forces. One week ago, the Israeli forces arrested Sheikh Rajab Raghib in front of the mosque in the village of Jibshit on the same charge.

FIVE ISRAELIS WOUNDED BY ISRAELI BOMB

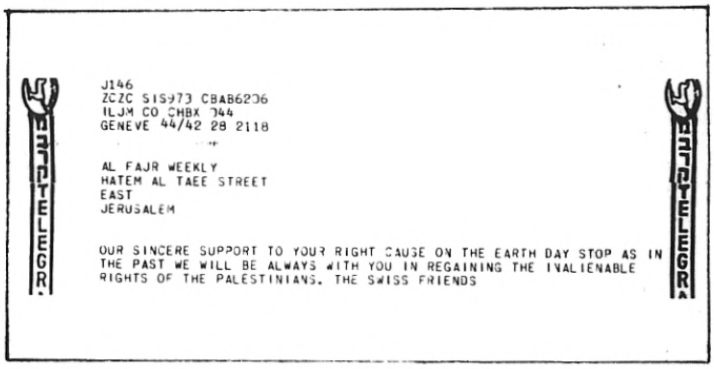
The Israeli military spokesman said that the landmine which exploded last week in Kufr Tabrakh in the Shouf region in Lebanon and which led to five Israeli soldiers being wounded, was Israeli-made. It seems that Phalangists had planted the mines during battles there between them and the Joint Forces.

PRESSURE ON GALILEE RISES

JERUSALEM — *Yediot Ahranot* reported that the Israeli police and border guards are intensifying their presence in the Galilee, the Triangle, the West Bank and Gaza Strip in expectation of demonstrations and protests by Arab residents on Land Day, March 30.

LEGAL AID FOR SETTLERS

Davar said that a special fund has been formed to "finance the legal expenses of Jews who oppose Arabs in the occupied territories." Robert Jacobitz, an American Jew, has donated US $50,000 in order to set up this fund. More money is expected to be given to the fund by Jewish contributors from the United States.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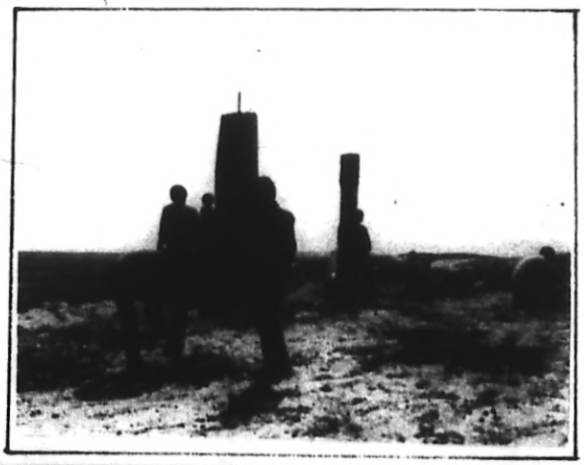
LAND DAY 1983



Carter's Excursions Spark Demonstrations

A second excursion into the West Bank by former US President Jimmy Carter, March 12, generated a new round of tension, demonstrations and strikes in camps, villages and towns. Five schools were closed and several camps placed under curfew following demonstrations. Stones were thrown at Israeli soldiers and military vehicles. The closest Carter himself came to the action was when Palestinian residents of Ramallah stoned a military vehicle at the end of his motorcade. Israeli soldiers dispersed several hundred demonstrators with water cannons and tear gas.

After his hot welcome in Ramallah, the architect of the Camp David accords met four Palestinian figures in the West Bank at the American Colony Hotel, East Jerusalem.

Ramallah

As reports of the arrival of Carter spread through Ramallah, several hundred school students took to the streets in impromptu protests. They gathered at al-Manara and Clock Squares. When Carter's motorcade arrived in town around 10:00 am, large numbers of armed Israeli soldiers tried to clear the area by shooting tear gas. There were several arrests. Despite the military pressure, the demonstrators threw rocks at the motorcade. The Israelis then curfewed the Manara and Clock Squares.

An eyewitness told *Al Fajr* that the demonstrators hurled stones at Carter's motorcade and at Israeli soldiers. Later, Israel Radio reported that two policemen were hurt.

That afternoon, Israeli soldiers welded shut several shops and forced others to open.

Ramallah Camps

At Amari camp, on the Ramallah-Jerusalem road, demonstrators blocked the main road and stoned Israeli vehicles. Israeli soldiers used water cannon to force back stone-throwers. At near-by Kalandia, the Israelis renewed the curfew for the third consecutive day and began a campaign of arrests. Camp residents say "several scores" of young men were held. Rumour has it they will be charged with "inciting against occupation." On Saturday morning, three military vehicles patrolled the main road of Jalazon camp and announced imposition of a dusk to dawn curfew.

Bethlehem Region

Bethlehem is still tense, three days after Carter's departure. In an escalating campaign, the Israeli authorities closed three schools. There was a partial commercial strike on the town, March 12. Dheisheh camp stone-throwers smashed windscreens of several Israeli vehicles on the main road to Jerusalem. The Israelis imposed a curfew on the camp and arrested 30 young men, according to local reports. They were transferred to al-Fara'a detention facility near Jenin.

Nablus

Scores of military vehicles were stationed at the entrances of the densely populated Balata and Beit al-Ma' camps and the Qasabeh quarter in downtown Nablus. There was a partial commercial strike in the town but no reports of rock-throwing or demonstrations. The Qasabeh quarter was curfewed later in the day.

Ya'abad, Jenin District

Over 100 residents in Ya'abad town demonstrated, set tyres alight and broke into the municipality of Ya'abad smashing its windows and hoisting a Palestinian flag. There were no reports of clashes with Israeli soldiers.

Gaza Strip

Students in Gaza did not enter classes. There were reports of demonstrations from all over town and students at the Islamic University hoisted the Palestinian flag over their university. Immediately afterwards, a squad of over 30 soldiers, accompanied by the deputy military governor in the town, stormed the campus. Deputy Governor Tahan was seen beating up a student. A student and teacher were arrested. As tension rose in the town, shopkeepers started closing stores.

While the curfews were clamped on, Carter met for two hours at the American Colony with Ibrahim Tawil, the deposed mayor of al-Bireh, Mustafa Natshe, the acting mayor of Hebron, Ramallah lawyer Fuad Shehadeh and Farah Saba A'raj, the mayor of Beit Jala. Reports from the Palestinians said that Carter told them the Camp David accords do not deny the rights of the Palestinian people. However, he agreed that the Camp David accords and the isolation and pacification of Egypt encouraged Israel to invade Lebanon.

Mustafa Natshe told *Al Fajr* that the municipality of Hebron had presented Carter with a memorandum about the settlers' terrorist activities in the town. "We talked with Carter about the Village League in the West Bank. It was because of this that Carter said in his press conference, March 12, that the Village Leagues do not represent the Palestinian people," said Natshe.

Hebron municipal council had invited Carter to visit Hebron but Carter apologized saying he did not have enough time, according to local reports.

ISRAELI MILITARY CLOSES UNIVERSITIES, POLYTECHNIC AND SCHOOLS

The Israeli military closed three institutions of higher education and five schools in Hebron and Bethlehem in two days, March 10 and 11. The written orders handed to the principals did not indicate reasons for the closures, nor did they define periods of closure.

Major Baruch, deputy governor of the 'civil administration' in Hebron and Bethlehem, in meetings with the heads of Hebron and Bethlehem universities and the Polytechnic in Hebron, said that the authorities decided to close them because students created "disturbances and threw rocks at Israeli military vehicles," according to reports of the interviews.

Earlier, Adib Qaisi, the head of the Polytechnic, was warned, March 10, that students, "must preserve order in the town." The next day, Qaisi was again summoned to meet Baruch and was given the closure order. Baruch said he was "sure that the students of the Polytechnic created disturbances in the city."

Muhammad Rashad Ja'abari, chairman of the Hebron University board of trustees and Kholqi Khanfar, the principal, were called to see Baruch, March 10, and were told that university students injured a soldier last week, and that he had decided to close the university, 'until further notice.' He handed over an order of closure.

Brother Robert Daszkiewicz, acting director of Bethlehem University, was summoned to the 'civil administration' headquarters in Bethlehem, March 10, and told the university would be closed until further notice.

The principals of Halhoul and Yatta secondary schools were also notified of the closure of their schools. Baruch said students threw stones at Israeli troops.

The Bethlehem Secondary School, Talita Secondary School and the Deir al-Latin Preparatory School, all in the Bethlehem area, were ordered closed the same day because pupils demonstrated when former US President Jimmy Carter visited Bethlehem, March 9.

Hebron Polytechnic Institute Closed For Indefinite Period

Israeli military authorities ordered Hebron Polytechnic Institute to be closed indefinitely March 11, calling it "a source of trouble in the district." Officials of the institute described the Israeli charge as baseless.

Signs of an impending closure order were conveyed to the Polytechnic administration one day earlier, when the deputy military governor, known as Major Baruch, summoned top officials and gave them a "final warning against causing disturbances." On that particular day, March 10, there were no demonstrations at the institute. Abdel Rahman Natshe, director of the Hebron Graduates Association (HGA), which runs the Polytechnic, told *Al Fajr*, "We got the impression that they were looking for a pretext to close the school down."

At the meeting, the Israeli officer made allegations that the students were "trouble-makers" and that the institute was a "hot bed of terrorist action." He directly accused Polytechnic students of crossing from their campus grounds to Ibn Rushd School and planting a bomb there. (Several bombs have been found in schools and mosques in Hebron lately but residents believe they are planted by settlers.)

The two Palestinian officials scoffed at the accusation, and explained that it was impossible to cross the area between the schools, separated as they are by a two-metre high wall, and a barbed wire fence.

Early on March 11, the same Israeli officer summoned Dr. Adib Qaisi, president of the HGA, and informed him of the closure decision. He claimed that Qaisi and Natshe had lied to him about the wall between the schools, but he refused to accept their invitation to see the wall for himself. "Obviously, they only needed a pretext to close down the institute," an HGA employee commented.

Hebron's acting Mayor Mustafa Natshe rejected the Israeli claims that the bombs found in Hebron were planted by Palestinian residents, and described it as an attempt to divert the investigation from its true course.

The five-year-old Polytechnic Institute was closed twice in 1981-1982 for a total of 51 days. The current closure will delay graduation and disrupt registration for the next academic year.

HALHOUL, GAZA ROCKED BY DEMONSTRATIONS

Traffic on the main Bethlehem-Hebron road was detoured March 15 as stone-throwing incidents by Palestinian youths in the Hebron hills made it virtually impossible for Israeli vehicles headed for Kiryat Arba settlement to pass without being hit by falling rocks.

The Hebron district village of Halhoul has been under curfew since March 12 after demonstrations and stone-throwings denouncing the increased harassment by settlers as well as the visit to the area of former US President Jimmy Carter.

The Halhoul Secondary Girls School was closed for an indefinite period March 13. The boys school was closed the following day. Local residents told *Al Fajr* that the army entered the school and transformed it into a military camp. They erected tents in the playground, fenced it with barbed wire and carried five bus loads of soldiers into the boys school.

Sources from Halhoul told *Al Fajr* that nearly all men in the Hebron district city were rounded up and are being interrogated inside the make-shift army headquarters.

An Israeli soldier was injured in the eye March 12 from a stone thrown at his vehicle.

Gaza

"Falujah and Jaffa high school students are attending classes at Gaza military headquarters," cynically remarked the father of a secondary school student fined IS7000 for demonstrating last week. Since March 7, most Gaza Strip schools were closed by striking students - first to commemorate Martyr's Day March 7 and later to protest the Israeli settlers' attempted takeover of al-Aqsa mosque and Carter's visit to the occupied territories.

In Gaza town, 139 students from Palestine, Jaffa and Falujah schools and the Islamic University were fined throughout the week between IS7000 to IS15,000 each. Three were additionally sentenced to two months in prison and the majority was forced to stand all day in front of Gaza military headquarters for one month.

Strikes Greet Carter to Old City

Residents of the Old City of Jerusalem welcomed former US President Jimmy Carter to Jerusalem with a general strike, demonstrations and clashes with Israeli troops and settlers. Israelis opened fire in attempts to quell demonstrations. One youth was reported wounded.

As time for Carter's arrival in Arab Jerusalem drew near, over 100 demonstrators assembled near the Garden Tomb, which Carter was expected to visit for a reception organised by Jerusalem churches, and began throwing rocks at the Israeli soldiers guarding the Carter procession.

Shopkeepers closed shops in a commercial strike which covered the Old City on the morning of March 9, on hearing Carter was due in town. Armed Israelis in plain clothes patrolled the Bab Khan Zeit, Wad and Bab al-Silsileh areas. Palestinian residents in the Old City believe that the "armed civilians" are settlers.

STREET-SIDE TESTIMONIES: DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE W.B.

by Said al-Ghazali

News agencies, Israel Radio, Monte Carlo Radio and even Jordan Radio reported the following incident this week: "One Palestinian was injured in the Old City of Jerusalem, March 12, after rocks were thrown at Israeli soldiers."

The next day, the same radio stations reported that the Palestinians in the Old City "threw rocks" at Israeli soldiers and that a bus was stoned near Damascus Gate.

These short news items attributed the new surge in demonstrations in the West Bank to the visit of former US President Jimmy Carter. Israeli cabinet ministers linked the wave of unrest to external developments such as the Palestine National Council meeting and the non-aligned conference in New Delhi.

News items are not people: to see what the protagonists had to say about recent events, an *Al Fajr* correspondent spent the sixth day of demonstrations on the streets of Jerusalem and Bethlehem to see what individuals, from demonstrators to the soldiers chasing them, had to say.

Jerusalem

Large numbers of Israeli soldiers and policemen are patrolling the streets of the Old City. Shopkeepers are standing near their half-closed shops not yet sure whether to strike or open for business. Students are at school early in the morning and then take to the streets. Even early morning reports are coming in that at the government Rashidiyeh and Mamouniyeh schools soldiers with dogs are preventing students from demonstrating.

Two Girl Students

On Salah al-Din street hundreds of girls walk away from al-Fatat, al-Laji'ah, Ittihad Nisa'i and Dar al-Tifl schools. Some are going home, others head for the Old City. Two 14-year-olds seem to be going to the mosque. They know why they demonstrate.

"Where are you going?"

"To Bab al-Majlis in the Old City to protest and prevent settlers from entering the mosque. If we can't prevent them we will protest, shout 'no' to the demolition of the mosque and 'no' to the Carter visit."

The Officer

Near the Hospice in the Old City. The Hospice stands on a busy intersection. It is the main first-aid station for people shot in Old City demonstrations. Outside it, four soldiers stop young men asking for their ID cards. "Where are you going?" Where are you coming from?" The questions are usually the same.

After a 30-year-old Druse officer finishes questioning one young man from Kalandia I asked him what he would do if students threw rocks at him.

"First I'd shoot in the air and if they didn't disperse I'd shoot at their legs. We have orders not to shoot unless our lives are endangered. We also ask for reinforcements."

"But you didn't ask for reinforcements when you shot Abu Khdeir (wounded in the Old City, March 12). You didn't shoot in the air."

"The soldier who shot Abu Khdeir was from my unit. I did not see the incident, but I was told he was carrying a knife or an iron rod and there was only a short distance between them."

"But the same soldier you are talking about cut the hand of a 29-year-old woman who tried to help the wounded boy."

"You should not believe this. If it is true then an investigation committee will be formed and the soldier will be tried."

"Why do you think the students demonstrate?"

"For Carter's visit and the attempts of the Israelis to enter the mosque and sometimes for propaganda. They are trouble-makers. Neither soldiers, shopkeepers nor tourists like demonstrations."

"What is your duty today?"

"I have to keep order and prevent disturbances in Wad Street. I sometimes work in Jerusalem and at other times in the West Bank. They chose me because I speak Arabic and know their habits. I am from a village in the Galilee."

The Journalist

One hundred meters from the soldiers' checkpost are groups of demonstrators from Dar al-Aytam School in the Old City. The demonstrators are kids aged 10 to 15, some of them carry stones and the rest just school bags. The students say they haven't been to classes for five consecutive days. Some say they threw stones in the demonstrations which swept the Old City, March 13.

The students say the soldiers usually disperse them by shooting in all directions. At this moment about 10 soldiers rush into Bab al-Hadid (Iron Gate) when they see the students gathering. The kids immediately vanish. The soldiers order me to follow them.

One soldier, speaking Arabic well, orders me: "Go in." He points to stairs leading to a house. I enter. Another soldier takes my notebook and begins reading aloud: "The students at the professional school in Tulkarm demonstrated and threw stones at military vehicles.' "What's this?" the soldier asks angrily.

"That is a news item. I am a journalist."

The soldier who speaks Arabic takes my book and asks if I speak Hebrew. I don't. He and the unit commander debate what to do with me. "He might create problems for us," says the man in charge, "Release him."

I do my best to emulate my students interviewees.

Bethlehem

The residents of Bethlehem did not receive Carter well. There was a total strike in the town and the students at the university threw rocks at Israeli vehicles. Soldiers fired over 20 tear gas cannisters onto campus after they surrounded it.

Two young men were standing in Mahd Square watching the traffic. News of the moment is the summoning of 20 girl students from the Bethlehem Secondary School to the local military headquarters.

The men are 24. One is a graduate of the local nursing college the other an accountant who works for the municipality. They believe that the reasons for the present demonstrations are Carter's visit to the West Bank and the statements of local mayor Elias Freij, who received him. "The demonstrators want to say that Freij does not represent any Palestinian in the West Bank," says one.

They point out that demonstrations ebb and flow in the West Bank. "The Day of the Land (March 30) is coming. We expect another wave of demonstrations."

Bethlehem Student

"I believe the students at Bethlehem University are not against Carter as a person but against American policy in the region."

"The wave of demonstrations in the West Bank can be attributed to Carter's attempts to defrost the Camp David accords. The Palestinian people in the West Bank reject them totally."

Shopkeepers

In Jerusalem the owner of a glass shop on Salah al-Din Street gives his theory of demonstrations. He believes that they are "50 percent positive and 50 percent negative. If there are reasons for the strike then they are positive, if there are no reasons then they are negative. This wave of West Bank strikes is positive because Carter wants to impose the Camp David accords on the Palestinians."

Palestinian Youth Wounded in Old City

A young Palestinian was wounded in the Old City of Jerusalem when Israeli soldiers shot at a group of students, March 12.

Mahmoud Jamal Abu Khdeir, 19 the wounded youth, a student at Antoiniyye School was leaving school with a group of friends after a strike had been declared to protest the settler attack on al Aqsa mosque the day before. Eyewitnesses say that as the school students passed a patrol in the vegetable market, one soldier opened fire at them. Abu Khdeir was hit in the leg and he fell to the ground.

An Israeli military spokesperson said the youth was shot after a stone-throwing incident. This was denied by his schoolmates and people living in the area where the shooting occurred. When an *Al Fajr* correspondent arrived in the area shortly after the shooting there was no significant number of stones or projectiles around. After clashes the ground is usually littered with debris.

Nafezeh Salaimeh 29, to whose house Abu Khdeir was taken, said she was dragged around and beaten by soldiers when she tried to stop them from getting into her house. She said they'd traced the boy's blood to her door.

Nafezeh who is pregnant pointed out the blood stains in her yard, in her bedroom and on her clothes. "I and three other men Ashour Rasem Jawad Salaimeh and Maher Salaimeh took the wounded (youth) to the Hospice Hospital in the Old City," she said. At 9.30 am half-an-hour after the incident Israelis came and took him to West Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital.

Waqf Council Calls For General Strike

After a meeting of the Islamic *waqf* council in Jerusalem March 15, council head Sa'ad Eddin Alami called for a two-hour general strike March 21 to protest harassment by Israeli fanatics, and recent Israeli attempts to enter and even to destroy al-Aqsa mosque. The *waqf* council called on all Moslems in Palestine to remain in the mosques for two hours from 11:00 am to 1.00 pm. The council also appealed to Moslems to increase their presence in al-Aqsa mosque, to defend the mosque against future assailants. "The situation is very dangerous at al-Aqsa mosque," the Islamic council's statement warned, "and acts of aggression have incresed against the mosque which is the first *Qiblah* (direction of prayer), and the third holiest shrine."

The Islamic council also appealed to Arab and Islamic countries to carry out their responsibilities towards al-Aqsa, and demanded that the continuing attacks on the mosque be discussed in the UN Security Council. A telegramme was sent to the UN secretary general detailing the history of aggression on al-Aqsa, and foreign consulates in Jerusalem were called to meet the members of the Islamic council for a briefing on the situation.

Over 43 armed Jewish fanatics, including 10 Israeli soldiers, were arrested last week in an attempt to enter the mosque. On Friday, March 4, a bomb was discovered in Bab al-Majlis gate of the mosque in late morning, the time of weekly prayer.

A group of girl students from the Jaser Preparatory School in Bethlehem told *Al Fajr* that the students did not participate in demonstrations because the principal stopped them from leaving classes.

"On the other hand," says one student politician, "they do not want to demonstrate because their fathers cannot pay the high fines which sometimes reach IS100,000."

Elias Freij told Israeli reporters when he received Carter that the demonstrations "prove there is a democracy." Most people in the city are quoting that line these days.

The man responsible for maintaining democracy in the West Bank is Israeli Chief-of-Staff Raphael Eitan. He too has been speaking to school children. At the settlement of Upper Nazareth he told Israeli students, March 15: "The Arabs started over 100 years ago with stones and they are still fighting us with the same weapons." He said the Israeli army has a duty to catch and punish stone-throwers. The same day, Labour Party leaders also said that the army "must act to stop stone-throwing incidents."

Ovadia Danon, editor of the Israeli government financed Arabic daily *Al Anba'*, gives his version of what should be done in an editorial in his paper. He threatens that settlers "might deport the Arabs."

"Regarding stoning soldiers, the consequences are graver than the activities of Jewish extremists, because such acts, if they continue, will lead to reactions carried out by Jewish extremists in all parts of Israel. They do not only carry stones and they are able to destroy Arab vehicles big and small, including lorries which pass through Jewish quarters. They can stop Arab workers who work in Israeli factories or (merchants who) cooperate with the Israelis.'"

House Demolitions in Gaza Evoke Collective Solidarity

We're used to sanguine journalistic accounts of the suffering of survivors of disasters and we sometimes imagine how we might cope in similar situations. And so when I read in the local press that the Israeli occupation authorities destroyed six houses in Gaza Strip last week, because a son in each house was accused of resistance activities, I conjured up scenes of merciless bulldozers crushing homes and property into rubble, with despondent families homeless in the bitter cold and rain, avoided by neighbours afraid of Israeli accusations of aiding 'security offenders.'

Sent by *Al Fajr* to report on the conditions of the families, I expected to bring back the standardized story of hopeless victims, crushed morally as well as physically. When I reached the sites of the destroyed homes, I did in fact see many signs of suffering. An elderly man still recuperating from a recent intestinal operation, lay shivering under two thin blankets by the scant warmth of a local stove. A crowd of children in outsized clothes – their own had been lost in the bewildered bulldozing gazed as a working head-of-household expressed distress over his loss of 30-years' savings, all invested in his house. A mother of three worried over how she'd care for her toddlers with her husband in prison and no roof over their heads. Another mother was absent, burying her own 70-year-old mother who died the day she heard about the destruction.

But amidst the rubble I also found examples of personal and collective determination that made a stronger impression. Abu Nafez, in a gesture unusual for a man of his age 61 year-old – agreed to be photographed only if he could make the V-sign. Zaida the blind daughter of an old sheikh, insisted that she be the one from among 22 family members to describe the night their house was bulldozed. Um Mahmoud with five sons forbidden to return to the country, and a sixth now in prison under interrogation, rushed her daughters out to borrow chairs and cups so that all guests could sit and drink tea. Neighbours, relatives, concerned individuals and societies donated food, clothing, beds and helped to build temporary shelters for two of the families.

Victory

Ahmad Abd al-Hadi al-Bheisi, or "Abu Nafez", as he is affectionately called, a semi-retired Tel Aviv municipality maintenance worker, is financially responsible for his wife and eight children. His 20-year-old son Nafez, who started working just four months ago, was arrested 45 days ago and is being held without trial. Abu Nafez, a refugee from Sawafir al-Sharqi, stiffly bends his work-worn frame to lean closer as he describes the February 23 destruction of his house in Mughaze camp.

"The soldiers came in three jeeps, three personnel carriers and a bulldozer. When they came to the house I tried to stay inside, and pleaded: 'We have eight small children just take one room.' My family screamed to alert the neighbours. The Israelis had cordoned off the area and refused to let anyone come to help pull out our belongings, as the bulldozer wrecked all six rooms of our house. Even our metal fence was destroyed and the two olive trees we planted two years ago were uprooted."

Abu Nafez has many questions to address to anyone who supports 'security' demolitions.

"Bombers drop their loads on unknown houses in Lebanon, but how could the Israeli army come purposely to my house, at midnight, when the kids were sleeping they saw the children and then destroy the home?

"What did the blocks of my house and my babies do to the Israeli state? Will destroying my house help Israel?"

When asked to pose with his family next to two Red Cross-donated tents, Abu Nafez calmly raises his fingers in the sign of victory. "This is the only way I want you to take my picture," he told the journalist.

Tragedy Becomes Commonplace

"When four of your sons have been in prison, five have not been allowed to enter the country for various periods of time, when soldiers have jumped onto, and through your roof in the middle of the night in numerous raids over the years, harassment is not a new thing," Um Mahmoud Nassar tells visitors to the makeshift hut, home since her house was destroyed February 23. The tin-cardboard-asbestos-denim-canvas-wood scrap shack, at the north-western end of Jabalia camp, was put together by concerned neighbours. They donated parts of the shelter and electric fittings, while pieces of asbestos and tin were salvaged from the remains of the Nassar's five-room house. "Actually nine rooms were destroyed, because the soldiers also destroyed the house of my brother-in-law, Jamil, next to our house, which was used mostly for storage," says Um Mahmoud. The middle-aged Beit Daras refugee continued: "Jabalia people are good to each other in such times. A house has been destroyed on almost every street in the camp, so everyone sympathises with our situation," she explains.

Um Mahmoud's son Muhammad, 17, a student in 12th grade at Falujah secondary school, has been in prison for two months. During that time, the family has not been allowed to see him, and since he has not been brought to trial, like sons of the other five families whose houses were destroyed last week, they do not know exactly of what he is accused. "I'm sure if he did anything it was honourable, through," says his proud mother, adjusting her headscarf. "He always listens to the news, is interested in politics, and circumstances forced him to become a man before his time... We must raise our heads," she says evoking no trace of pity.

The House that Israel Destroyed

In Fakhari, a rich agricultural area between Khan Yunis and Rafah, Zaida Shehadeh Muhammad Abu Daqqa, a blind woman, lived with 21 other people in the house her father built in 1956. On February 24, the solid 320 sq. meter, 12-room dwelling was punched full of holes by an Israeli bulldozer. "The walls were so thick," she said, "they had to leave the frame standing, but they forbid us to ever return to live on the spot to rebuild this house."

Zaida's brother, Jamal, 20, disappeared two months ago. Shortly after, the Israeli authorities came to arrest him. The family assumes he is not in the country.

Still More

Another house in Fakhari, home to six people, was destroyed on February 23. Homeowner Muhammad Ahmad Abu Daqqa, 26, had been in prison under interrogation for nearly two months, when his home was demolished.

In Deir al-Balah camp, two houses were destroyed on February 22. The four-room house of Zahara Muhammad Bheissi, 50, was bulldozed about 40 days after her son Ziad, 19, was imprisoned. Khalil Attiye Nashabat, 22, who lived with his brother Ibrahim, 19, imprisoned at the beginning of January, was ordered to take apart his four-room house with his own hands. It is bordered on four sides by homes, so there was no room for the bulldozer to pass.

Victory: Postscript

When residents of Jabalia and Shate' camps heard that in Mughaze camp the Bheisi family had no shelter from the rain, they donated supplies and their time to work with Mughaze residents to build a two-room tin shed for the homeless family.

DURA MAYOR ATTACKED IN NIGHT RAID

Unknown assailants attacked the house of Mohammad Mousa Amr, the elected mayor of Dura in the Hebron district, with automatic rifle fire March 13. Doors and windows of the house were damaged, but no injuries were reported.

The attack took place shortly after midnight, minutes after the locally generated electric power to the city closed down for the night. The mayor told *Al Fajr* that suddenly he and his family came under fire from all directions. The shooting continued for three or four minutes, after which everything became quiet, Amr said.

Neighbours said that there were five attackers who left the area on foot. The police say that the bullets were fired from Israeli army weapons. The same weapons are used by the Village Leagues, who are armed by the Israeli military.

Speaking to *Al Fajr* by telephone, Amr, who was sacked by the Israeli 'civil administration' several months ago for refusing to cooperate with it, declined to accuse any party of responsibility for the attack. Somewhat cryptically, he said, "Those who carry weapons are the same ones who attacked my house." He blames the Israeli authorities for failing to punish the guilty people and asserted that the incident has political connotations. "It was intended as a threat to nationalist people."

Paid advertisements from individuals and institutions condemning the attack were censored out of local papers.

YATTA MUKHTAR THREATENED AT GUNPOINT BY SETTLERS

Armed Israeli settlers forced their way into the home of Rushdi Sari, mukhtar of Yatta village, on March 10 to demand IS12,000 payment for a car windshield they say was broken by local students.

Sari was threatened at gunpoint by four vigilantes and told to pay the sum by March 12 at nearby al-Karmeh settlement or his house would be burned. The mukhtar has refused to pay and filed a police complaint against the intruders.

The settlers arrived at Sari's home at 9:30 pm with two Yatta villagers whom they forced to accompany them. When Sari opened his door to his neighbours, the settlers entered and three sat down. A fourth remained standing, pointed a gun at Sari's head and issued the threats. With the neighbours acting as translators, Sari told the Israelis he had no children and could not be held responsible for others' actions.

On Saturday, March 12, Sari received another threat, this one conveyed by a local who works at the settlement.

Residents of Yatta, as other villagers throughout the West Bank, have seen an increase in Israeli vigilante activity lately. The Yatta mukhtar complained that settlers enter the village, fire in the air, forcibly disperse demonstrations and even abduct students while the authorities look on.

Last week, settlers forced their way into Yatta secondary school and kidnapped two students. "What would happen if they kidnapped me and killed me at some remote place?" Sari asked.

Destroyed Trees Pave Way For Land Confiscation

Officials from the Israeli Land Administration (ILA) and the Green Patrol uprooted 200 olive trees belonging to the Bdair family in Kufr Qassem in the Triangle March 8. Israeli officials, who had warned the family earlier in the week against working on their 36-dunum plot, deny committing the sabotage. However, a local shepherd saw three men a Green Patroller known as 'Jimmy' and ILA guards 'Dani' and Hassan Odeh from Jaljulyah – pulling up the two-year-old trees with their hands and jeep. Jeep tracks were later discovered by engineer Yasir Bdair on his land.

Immediately after the incident, the landowners filed a complaint at the police station, accusing the three officials of uprooting the trees. Israeli laws state that it is illegal to uproot trees.

The three officials are well known to Kufr Qassem landowners since they constantly 'patrol' the land surrounding the village to prevent farmers from planting without government permits.

The tactic of denying permits or destroying crops is used by the government to legitimise confiscating of 'uncultivated' land, say local people. According to Ottoman land laws, still in force in Israel, the state can seize unregistered land not used by its owners for more than 10 consecutive years. The ILA annually photographs land for this reason.

The Bdair farmers, whose land, like other hilly areas, was never registered by the Israeli government, insist that they have continually planted cereals and other crops. Yunis Bdair, who is legally pursuing the case against the ILA, described the uprooting of the trees as part of Israeli policy. "I would not be surprised if one day they come and tell us to leave our homes," he said.

Kufr Qassem, which was the scene of the 1956 massacre, owned a total of 20,000 dunums of land before 1948. Today only 10,000 dunums remain, of which an estimated 2,000 dunums of land, located to the east of the village near the 'green line', is vulnerable to immediate confiscation.

SOLDIERS TEAR GAS STUDENTS

ISRAELI MILITARY CLOSES BEIT SAHOUR SCHOOLS

Three Beit Sahour schools with a total student population of over 1,250 were ordered closed during the past two weeks, following enthusiastic demonstrations, and protests by school children against the Carter visit, and general Israeli policies. Students and teachers at the schools believe that the collective punishment measure will continue until after Land Day, March 30, a commerative day widely celebrated in the West Bank, Gaza and Galilee.

Beit Sahour Preparatory School, with an enrollment of 250 students in its four grades, was the last to be closed, March 17, in response to events of the previous day which eyewitnesses recounted to *Al Fajr*. In the early morning on March 16, students between 12 and 16 years of age had filled the street adjacent to the school with stones, metal scraps and burning tyres in an attempt to prevent soldiers from passing. A small Palestinian flag was also raised on a mast on top of the school snack shop.

At 7:30 am, shortly before the opening bell rang, two Israeli jeep loads of soldiers were stopped by the rock-strewn road, and an accompanying hail of stones. The soldiers responded by firing live ammunition towards the crowd of children, one 12-year-old told *Al Fajr*. To protect the students, the school principal ordered everyone to enter the classroom building.

Soldiers armed with automatic rifles and clubs, surrounded the school and refused to allow anyone to leave, even after the principal assured them that the students would go directly to their homes. An officer demanded that students first clean the streets before being released from detention. As students busied themselves with removing stones, they were verbally harassed by soldiers. A teacher in the school, who declined to be identified, recalled that one student wearing a *kaffiyah* (Arab head covering) was extensively questioned about his reasons for wearing it. A teachers' advisor had intervened sacrastically, "If you want to make a law against wearing *kaffiyahs*, then we will enforce it on the students." After the clean-up, students were allowed to leave, class by class, while teachers escorted them to the main street.

Moments later, the Israeli officer in charge of the soldiers' unit informed the school principal, Hanna Judeh, that the school was closed down.

One week earlier, the Beit Sahour Girls Secondary School was closed. The 12-grade school, attended by more than two-thirds of the girl students in Beit Sahour, was shut the day former US President Jimmy Carter visited neighbouring Bethlehem. A 14-year-old girl who described events at her school said that the majority of the girls refused to enter class that day. "We sat in the playground singing nationalist songs and chanting anti-occupation and anti-Village League slogans," she said. Among the most repeated slogans was "down by the Village Leagues." (Beit Sahour residents have recently been plagued by Village League ID card 'checks,' and *de facto* nightly curfews).

Soon, the girls found themselves surrounded with Israeli soldiers. As the girls rushed inside the building, soldiers began firing tear gas canisters into the corridors of the first floor. More than 20 grade school children were transferred to hospital for treatment of gas poisoning.

After more than one hour of the siege, the soldiers agreed to allow the girls to leave, on condition they go straight home. "The soldiers, however, tricked us," says one student. "They fired tear gas at us, for the second time, as we were leaving." The next morning, Fifi Harami, the school principal, received a telephone call from the Bethlehem area military governorate informing her that the shcool was ordered closed. Forty students, mainly from the third secondary class, were summoned to the military headquarters for interrogation.

At the same time, students from the Beit Sahour Boys Secondary School were holding their own protests and the school met a similar fate. Over 20 soldiers tried unsuccessfuly to disperse demonstrating students by various means. But students had prepared themselves with countermeasures: some youths had strategically placed buckets filled with water as others stocked the streets with any material they could find. "When four jeeps arrived to investigate the rising black smoke they were unable to come close to us because the street was impassable," said one student.

Many students, especially those who come from the Ta'amreh and Sawahreh Beduin tribes, began vaulting stones by sling shot at the soldiers. Israeli border guards responded with saturation firing of tear gas canisters. An eyewitness said that students put out the burning canisters throwing them into the water buckets. The school was ordered closed down on the same day, in an order conveyed by the Bethlehem area education department director. Last school year, both the boys and girls secondary schools were closed down for more than two weeks, also following demonstrations and protests. Students from both institutions insist that expressing protest is a "basic right which we will never giver up" as one 18-year-old put it. "As long as we remian under occupation, it is a duty to rise in protest of its practices," he said vehemently.

VILLAGE LEAGUERS HARASS NUBA RESIDENTS

Five members of the Israeli-backed Village Leagues forced their way into the village of Nuba, 20 kilometers west of Hebron, March 15, and threatened to "destroy the village" unless the villagers turn in alleged demonstrators. Later in the day, Israeli soldiers arrested three residents and questioned them on demonstrations.

Eyewitnesses said that the Leaguers, who were armed with automatic rifles, were led by Aziz 'Amleh, brother of the Hebron area Village League head Jamil 'Amleh. The League men drove around the village, firing in the air and making occasional stops to ask about Abdel Hamid Dababseh a member of the local village council. "Unless he comes to see the League head in one hour, we will destroy the village," Aziz 'Amleh threatened.

The Leaguers finally left after spending more than one hour in the village. Later in the night Israeli troops arrested three residents, Ahmad Mohammad Ibrahim Shrouf, 50, his son Abdel Karim, 16, and Abdel Aziz Mohammad Ibrahim Shrouf, 45, and interrogated them on charges of calling the Hebron area Village League head a traitor. All three were released after they spent one day in a local military jail.

Nuba's mukhtar and Imam expressed fears that the Village League's unchallenged activities will lead to major confrontations with local residents.

BIR ZEIT UNIVERSITY THREATENED WITH CLOSURE

Israeli authorities threatened to close Bir Zeit University if any teacher holding a foreign passport was found on campus as of March 14. Israeli authorities notified the university administration March 13 that if any foreign teacher was stopped by the military checkpost on the road to Bir Zeit, then the entire campus of the university would be sealed. Israeli authorities erected two checkposts along Ramallah - Bir Zeit road to back up their threats.

Bir Zeit University teachers have been fighting against signing an anti-PLO undertaking since August 1982. They consider the pledge "a highly political statement." After two months of negotiations between the universities and Israeli authorities over the issue, Israeli authorities offered to change the word terrorist into "hostile." Foreign teachers in all Palestinian universities still refused to sign and continued their international campaign against it. In December 1982 Israeli authorities incorporated the pledge into the work permit.

In the last six months over 50 teachers have been expelled from the country. Israeli authorities gave the remaining foreign faculty members a deadline of March 14 for signing "I read and understand what is written above" on the new work permit. No foreign passport-holding teacher signed the text or attended classes March 14.

ARAFAT RISES TO THE OCCAISION

Arafat arrived on the rostrum of the closing session of the Palestine National Council meeting to roaring applause. Having just been re-elected to a new two year term as chairman of the PLO executive committee and the door having been left open for him to follow his diplomatic pursuits he had good reason to be pleased. But once on the platform, current political discussions were forgotten and he concentrated on the "fire mountains" of Lebanon and the heroic stand of the unified forces there.

Arafat's pride in the fighters was obvious. He described their defense of Beirut exactly as a father describes the achievements of his children. It was clear that he had to fight hard to hold his emotions in when he read the text of the last telegramme he received from the "37 fighters at the Beaufort Castle, all of whom fought until they died" defending Arab integrity.

After last summer's war, Israel's continued occupation of parts of Lebanon, the massacres at Sabra and Shatila, the present Arab position and the various proposals for a solution, many analysts believed that the PLO would come out of its 16th session divided and thus weakened.

Chairman Arafat, it was also believed, would lose some of his power within the PLO and thus in the international arena.

Watching Arafat on the platform at the closing session can only have left those who were wishing such things disappointed. At Algiers it was undoubtedly achieved. Chairman Arafat's stature, rather than being weakened, was strengthened.

Leaving rhetoric aside, the unity of the Palestinians can also be observed in physical form. In Middle East politics, the mingling of PLO leaders with the people is a unique phenomenon. The leaders trust the people and the people usually find a way to criticise when criticism is called for. Thus throughout the recently concluded conference it became a common sight to see the top leadership of the PLO chatting with journalists and delegates at all times and in all places.

In the next two years, the PLO executive committee, with its new mandate from the PNC, will continue to search for satisfactory solutions to the Palestinian question. Nothing has been excluded. In the words of the chairman, neither the olive branch nor the gun. The objective remains clear, the achievement of the right to self-determination for the Palestinian people, their right to return, the right of an independent Palestinian state on Palestinian soil and for all this to be done through the offices of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, their sole legitimate representative.

Lift on Municipal Money Aimed at Controlling Development

The Israeli authorities lifted the ban on bringing municipality money from Jordanian banks, at the beginning of this month, according to reports from municipalities. Cash can only be brought in on condition that they agree to put it in a civil administration' "Judea and Samaria Development Fund."

The "Judea and Samaria Development Fund" was established in 1982, by Military Order 974. The order states that "all money entering from enemy territory must be put in the fund. ' According to the military order, a special committee to be appointed by the West Bank military governor will be responsible for it. It is not clear what kind of projects and what communities the fund will serve. People closely associated with the West Bank municipalities suggest that it could be used for developing Jewish settlements. Municipal officials say it would consolidate the occupation's control on development projects and is an attempt to break the virtually unanimous boycott of the 'civil administration.'

News of the military order came when the Israeli authorities proposed to the mayors of Silwad, Bani Zaid and Beitunia, that they put money from their municipal bank accounts in Jordan in "special development project accounts."

An Israeli official reportedly told them that agreement to such conditions is a prerequisite for permits to bring money from Jordan.

Municipal officials from Silwad and Beitunia insisted that the mayors who attended the meeting rejected the Israeli offer. They said that such a measure would subject the municipalities to the authorities' wishes. ' For a sum of money we need, we must get the authorities' approval beforehand in order to be able to withdraw it," said an employee in Beitunia, who asked his name not be published.

For nearly two years, all West Bank municipalities were prevented from bringing cash from Jordan. This halted all development projects. Many municipalities had to cut back services.

In Silwad, *Al Fajr* learned that workers' salaries for February have not yet been paid because there is no money in the municipal account. The military authorities are holding a total of IS25,000 in property taxes, which legally belong to that municipality. When *Al Fajr* asked a Silwad municipal official if the Israeli authorities have provided them with financial assistance, he replied, "we do not need assistance, we need our rights."

For Bir Zeit municipality the situation is as bad, but the mayor still refuses to meet the 'civil administration', even to request a permit to get money from Amman. Abdallah Khalil, secretary of the municipal council, said that there are no contacts whatsoever between the municipality and the Israeli authorities. He said that the municipality continues to provide the necessary services to the residents, and depends on its own resources for the services.

Following the publication of the Israeli 'civil administration' conditions, Israel Radio claimed, March 6, that the Jordanian government had informed mayors of its opposition to the Israeli proposal, in effect prohibiting the release of their funds.